NATION

WB anti-infiltration drive triggers 'reverse exodus'

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Mkts snap 2-day rally to end lower as oil prices spike

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Royals to rely on Archer, Vaibhav to tackle SRH

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 27 MAY 2026 | WEDNESDAY | BENGALURU | 9 DHU'L-HIJJAH 1447 H | Vol 5 | Issue No 136 | Pages: 8

Biennial polls to 7 K'taka Council seats on 18 June

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

Biennial elections to seven Karnataka Legislative Council seats from the MLAs' quota will be held on 18 June, the Election Commission said on Tuesday. The terms of the seven MLCs are due to expire on 30 June. Among those retiring include Congress members Govinda Raju, Naseer Ahmed, Tippannappa, and B K Hariprasad, and BJP members N Nagaraju (MTB), Prathap Simha Nayak K, and Sunil Vallyapur.

Notifications for the polls will be issued on 1 June. The last date for filing nominations is 8 June, while scrutiny of nominations will take place the following day, the Election Commission said in a release. The last date for withdrawal of candidatures is 11 June 11. Counting of votes will take place on 18 June after polling concludes, the EC added. —*PTI*

>>>MORE ON PAGE 2

Siddaramaiah to quit? CM snubs RS berth

CM and his deputy DKS were summoned to Delhi amid the power tussle

Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah with Deputy CM DK Shivakumar at Indira Bhawan in New Delhi on Tuesday —*PTI*

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Months of speculations about Karnataka leadership tussle may have finally come to an end. Congress sources reportedly confirmed that the party top brass has asked Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to resign. To this Siddaramaiah has asked for a day's time and also rejected the high command's offer to contest a Rajya Sabha seat, according to multiple media reports.

Sources indicate the Congress top brass is backing DKS for the top post.

Both Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar were summoned to Delhi as the point of interest remained the protracted leadership tussle and whether there would be any resolution. Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar were accompanied by the MLAs supporting them.

- Both Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar were summoned to Delhi as the point of interest remained the protracted leadership tussle and whether there would be any resolution.

At the core of the leadership tangle is Shivakumar's demand that he be elevated to the chief minister's post in accordance with a "promise" which his supporters claim was made to him during state assembly elections in 2023.

The Congress's central leadership held deliberations for several hours with its Karnataka state leaders, including Shivakumar, who is also the state party chief, at the Indira Bhawan headquarters.

The Congress on Tuesday termed as "mere speculation" the talk about any leadership change in Karnataka. It asserted that the day-long discussions between the central and state top brass were solely focused on the upcoming elections to the Rajya Sabha and the state's Legislative Council.

The meeting was attended by Congress President Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, AICC General Secretary, Organisation, KC Venugopal and AICC General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka Randeep Surjewala, among others. Asked about any leadership change, Siddaramaiah also said, "It is only a speculation". Agencies

>>>More on Page 2

SC says no to granting cabinet rank to MLAs, MLCs in Karnataka

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

A Supreme Court bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi on Tuesday refused to entertain a plea challenging the Karnataka government's decision to grant cabinet rank to 42 legislators, including Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs)and Members of Legislative Council (MLCs) as heads of various boards and corporations.

"We dispose of this petition with the liberty to the petitioner to file a review petition before the high court," the bench said.

The petitioner, Suri Payala of the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, asserted that while appointing MLAs and MLCs as chairpersons would not have been problematic, conferring cabinet status upon them violates Article 164(1A) of the Constitution which limits the size of the council of ministers to prevent unwarranted government expansion.

The plea warns that allowing such appointments would set a dangerous precedent, encouraging legislators to seek additional roles and perks, thereby undermining legislative integrity.

It also claims that extending cabinet rank to a select group of legislators is arbitrary, violates principles of natural justice, and erodes public trust. —*PTI*

QUAD counters China with Fiji port, Indo-Pacific surveillance

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Quad on Tuesday announced plans to build a port in Fiji and launch a new Indo-Pacific maritime surveillance initiative, as the four-nation grouping sharpened its focus on countering China's growing footprint in the region.

At the 11th Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi, India, the US, Japan and Australia announced the launch of the Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration, which will coordinate surveillance efforts and strengthen maritime awareness. The initiative is expected to improve monitoring of growing congestion in international waterways and the movement of "dark ships" operating without identification signals especially used by China.

In a message to Beijing, the ministers expressed serious concerns over "dangerous and coercive actions" in the East and South China seas, including interference in offshore resource development and risky manoeuvres by military aircraft, coast guard and maritime militia vessels.

China reacted sharply. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning accused the grouping of promoting "exclusive groupings" and "bloc confrontation".

India hit back, saying that the Quad was not aimed at any particular geography and insisted that the maritime surveillance initiative should not be viewed as militarisation of the grouping.

The ministers also unveiled an Indo-Pacific energy security framework to address supply disruptions through strategic fuel reserves, coordinated emergency response mechanisms and targeted policy initiatives. The move comes amid rising concerns over disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz due to Iran war.

The Quad called for uninterrupted global commerce through Hormuz. EAM S Jaishankar said the Indo-Pacific would become increasingly central to global trade, energy flows and maritime commerce. However, there was no clarity on when the next Quad summit would take place. —*PTI*

Quad announces $20B critical minerals deal
>>>More on Page 3

Cooperation between nations should be conducive to peace, stability and prosperity, and not target third party. We oppose forming exclusive groupings or engaging in bloc confrontation
— Mao Ning , Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson

At the global level, we have to address issues like supply chain resilience, connectivity choke points, manufacturing and resource concentrations and gaps in critical infrastructure. Each one of them offers a new argument for more partnerships
—S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister

INDIA, US SIGN LANDMARK PACT TO SECURE CRITICAL MINERALS SUPPLY

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

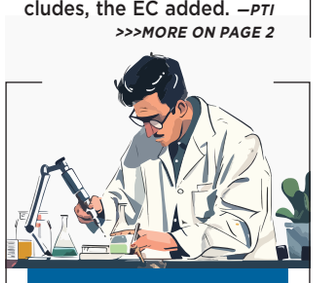
India and the US on Tuesday firmed up a key framework for cooperation in ensuring steady supplies of critical minerals on the sidelines of the Quad foreign ministers' meeting in New Delhi. The move comes amid growing concerns over China's export controls on rare earth elements and strategic metals vital for global technology supply chains.

"This framework aims to deepen our cooperation across the entire critical minerals and rare earth supply chain, including mining, processing, recycling and related investment," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in presence of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

He added that it will strengthen resilient and diversified supply chains, help finance projects, and ensure effective management of critical minerals and rare earths.

Rubio highlighted importance of the strategic partnership between the US and India for their national interests. He also mentioned the US-backed Pax Silica initiative, launched in December 2025 to build a supply chain for critical minerals and artificial intelligence, which India has joined.

Critical minerals are considered vital for high-end technology products including electric vehicles (EVs), drones, and battery storage. China has been a dominant player in the critical minerals supply chain globally, accounting for around 70 per cent of global rare earth mining. The US government is supporting projects worth more than USD 30 billion in investments, loans, and other support in partnership with the private sector to secure these chains. —*PTI*



MOST INDIAN RESEARCHERS WANT TO MOVE OVERSEAS: REPORT

India has the highest proportion of researchers globally who are considering moving overseas in the next few years, according to a new study.

Why? Opportunities to move to a larger research team, superior facilities or equipment for research, better salary, better work-life balance, and more research funding available in their field abroad.

Researchers surveyed: 3,200

Indian researchers: 224

52% **Indian researchers wish to move abroad**

In US, **40%** want to relocate while in China, it is just **13%.**

Researchers in India intend to go broad because India is not necessarily known for its postgraduate programs (PGs) and research capability. India is very well known for its undergraduate studies
—Dr Sandeep Sancheti, vice president of academic relations, Elsevier

Contrary to common perception, according to Sancheti, retaining Indian researchers is not necessarily a good thing. He stated that for research to thrive in the country, it needs a diverse set of people.

THE STUDY CALLED 'RESEARCHER OF THE FUTURE 2026' IS BY ELSEVIER, A MAJOR GLOBAL ACADEMIC PUBLISHING AND ANALYTICS COMPANY.

US strikes Iranian base amid peace talks impasse

TEHRAN, 26 MAY

The US military said it carried out "self-defence" strikes in Iran, including missile launch sites and boats allegedly laying mines.

The strikes reportedly targeted areas around Bandar Abbas naval facilities near the Strait of Hormuz.

US said the attacks were intended to protect American troops from threats posed by Iranian forces. Iran said the strikes as a violation of the ceasefire and accused Washington of acting in "bad faith". Its foreign ministry warned the US would bear responsibility for "all consequences", adding that no act of aggression would go unanswered.

Iranian media reported four Revolutionary Guard personnel were killed. Tehran also claimed it had intercepted drones and a fighter jet entering Iranian airspace.

Meanwhile, Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei warned that the region would "no longer serve as shields and safe havens for American bases". —*PTI*

OUT ON BAIL, GADAG MAN RAPES GIRL AGAIN TO TAKE REVENGE

GADAG, 26 MAY

A man accused in a 2025 rape case allegedly raped the same girl again after being released on bail, in what police said was an act of revenge for sending him to prison.

The accused, Allhabaksha Koppad, had earlier been arrested by Shirahatti police under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act following a complaint filed by the 17-year-old victim. He was recently released on bail.

Police said Koppad allegedly took the girl to an isolated area on the outskirts of Lakshmeshwar town and raped her. The victim was on her way to a computer class at the time of the incident on 23 May. According to police, the accused and the victim were known to each other, and the "girl had accompanied him willingly before the alleged assault took place".

Following another complaint lodged by the victim, Lakshmeshwar police arrested the accused and booked him again under the POCSO Act. —*Salar News*

FREE SPEECH CONCERNS

Govt orders takedown of reel on protest against Vizag data centre

AMARAVATI, 26 MAY

A two-minute Instagram reel on the impact of a proposed Google data centre in Visakhapatnam has reportedly been removed following a government order, according to the Environmental Reporting Collective (ERC).

The Environmental Reporting Collective (ERC) is an international nonprofit network of journalists and newsrooms spanning over a dozen countries, investigating large-scale environmental crimes.

The reel, which had garnered millions of views, was part of a longer YouTube documentary titled 'Meet the Villagers Fighting Google's Biggest Data Centre Outside the US'.

The reel focused on allegations of forced displacement and land acquisition affecting farmers and Dalit communities in villages near Visakhapatnam, where a large hyperscale AI and data centre project is planned. It featured villagers saying, "This land was granted to us 57 years ago," while documenting protests and resistance against the project. The report alleged that residents were being pressured or coerced into surrendering ancestral homes and agricultural land that form their primary source of livelihood.

The reel focused on allegations of forced displacement and land acquisition affecting farmers and Dalits —***Environmental Reporting Collective***

In a statement, ERC said the video was restricted on 22 May by Meta, four days after publication. No reason for the restriction was disclosed. ERC has demanded that the video be reinstated immediately, while standing by its reporting.

Google announced plans in 2025 to build a one-gigawatt data centre in Andhra Pradesh. The wider $15 billion investment with Adani Enterprises through AdaniConneX is expected to transform Visakhapatnam into one of the world's largest AI and data centre hubs outside the United States. —*Salar News*

CNG prices hiked for 4th time in 11 days

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Compressed natural gas (CNG) prices in the national capital and adjoining cities were raised by Rs 2 per kg on Tuesday, marking the fourth increase in less than 11 days.

CNG now costs Rs 83.09 per kg, up from Rs 81.09, according to Indraprastha Gas Ltd, the country's largest city gas company. CNG in Noida and Ghaziabad will now cost Rs 91.70 per kg, while in Gurugram, it will be priced at Rs 88.12 per kg.

The CNG price hike in the national capital came as state-owned fuel retailers started passing on the impact of higher international oil prices to consumers.

In Mumbai, where rates were last revised on 14 May, CNG costs Rs 84 per kg. In Bengaluru, it is Rs 90 per kg.

The repeated hikes are expected to raise running costs for private vehicle owners, taxis and public transport fleets that rely on CNG, though the fuel continues to remain cheaper than petrol and diesel on a per-kilometre basis. —*PTI*

Bank of Baroda worker steals ₹ 8.7 cr from RBI vault

AHMEDABAD, 26 MAY

A joint custodian at Bank of Baroda's Kalupur branch in Ahmedabad was arrested on Friday after he allegedly stole Rs 8.7 crore from a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) currency chest housed at the facility. Two contract labourers who allegedly assisted him have since also been taken into custody, per local news reports.

According to Assistant Commissioner of Police (D Division) Hitendra Chaudhary , the theft took place on 13 January and was discovered ahead of a routine RBI inspection. A FIR was registered at Kalupur police station on 15 May and Kadiyar was arrested days later.

Kadiyar confessed to purchasing a bungalow, a shop, and a small truck using the stolen funds, which he also invested into cryptocurrency. Investigators are separately probing whether Kadiyar's wife, who is a head constable with the Railway Police, had any involvement.

Bank of Baroda said it had taken cognisance of the incident and characterised it as an isolated case. —*Agencies*

RANVEER SAYS SORRY

Actor Ranveer Singh visited the Chamundeshwari Temple on Tuesday and apologised for allegedly mocking gods when mimicking 'Kantara' *ANI*

CM change talk speculation, not reality: Cong

When asked if Cong High Command talked about CM change, KC Venugopal said 'No'

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Congress held a marathon six-hour meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday, claiming that it was strictly about the upcoming elections to the Rajya Sabha and the state's Legislative Council. Asked if there was any discussion on leadership change, AICC General Secretary, Organisation, KC Venugopal replied emphatically with "No".

"Today, the entire discussion was only concentrated on the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections and (Legislative) Council elections of Karnataka," Venugopal said. "Whatever speculation you people are doing, that is only speculation, no reality at all," Venugopal told the media after the meeting. He was flanked by Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar.

Amid speculations about Shivakumar being the next chief minister, Siddaramaiah's one breakfast meet with his loyalists raised eyebrows.

Ahead of the crucial Delhi meet on Tuesday, Siddaramaiah had a breakfast meeting with his ministers and party colleagues at Indira Bhavan in New Delhi, most considered his loyalists. The move is being seen as a show of strength. Among the attendants were senior minister G Parameshwara, KJ George, Satish Jarkiholi Byrathi Suresh, Haryana in-charge BK Hariprasad and legal advisor Ponnanna.

Shivakumar arrived in Delhi with his brother DK Suresh. Earlier in the day, when asked about the possibility of leadership change, Shivakumar responded with a big smile and silence.

The meetings are being closely watched amid speculations about the party's internal dynamics and the way forward for the state government.

The supporters of Shivakumar have been insisting on his elevation to the top post in line with a reported power-sharing agreement with Siddaramaiah when the party won the 2023 Assembly elections. However, no such arrangement was made public.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Congress MP KC Venugopal, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, at a presser after meeting the Congress High Command at Indira Bhawan, in New Delhi; Siddaramaiah earlier held a breakfast meeting with senior Congress Ministers in the national capital —*PTI*

ON UPCOMING POLLS

About the top brass meeting, Venugopal said the candidates of the Rajya Sabha and Council seats of Karnataka will be announced along with the other seats such as Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. "This is what we have decided today, and nothing else was discussed," he asserted.

On a possible cabinet reshuffle, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said, "It did not come up for discussion."

Of the four Rajya Sabha seats getting vacant in Karnataka, the Congress can win three seats and the BJP one.

Mallikarjun Kharge's Rajya Sabha seat is getting vacant in June and he is likely to be re-elected from Karnataka.

GOOD NEWS FOR DK SURESH?

The party may also field Shivakumar's brother DK Suresh as one of the Rajya Sabha candidates, as well as a woman or an OBC nominee. Suresh is a former Lok Sabha member from the State.

Besides, the Congress leaders are also learnt to have discussed the party candidates for the legislative council seats. The Congress is likely to get four seats in the legislative council out of the seven vacancies, going by its present strength in the State assembly. —*Agencies*

Smoke scare on Indigo flight, 230 evacuated

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

More than 230 passengers and crew members were safely evacuated from an IndiGo aircraft after smoke was detected inside the cabin at Bengaluru airport on Tuesday evening. IndiGo said flight 6E 6017, scheduled to operate from Bengaluru to Chennai, was taxiing towards the runway when smoke was noticed in the aircraft. All passengers and crew were shifted safely to the terminal and attended to by airline staff, IndiGo stated. Sources said the incident involved an Airbus A321 aircraft carrying over 230 people. The airline arranged an alternate aircraft to operate the Bengaluru-Chennai flight. —*PTI*

23 held for betting during IPL T20 cricket tournament

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

Twenty-three individuals have been arrested in connection with alleged illegal betting during the IPL T20 cricket tournament. The Special Investigation Squad of the Central Crime Branch (CCB) conducted coordinated raids across multiple police station limits in Bengaluru city. Authorities registered 17 separate betting cases and detained 23 suspects. Several items linked to betting operations were seized, including seven mobile phones valued at Rs 1.10 lakh, cash amounting to Rs 1,06,433, and betting chips worth Rs 13.37 crore. The total value of seized property was estimated at Rs 13.39 crore, with further investigation ongoing, a senior police officer said. —*PTI*

5 killed in separate accidents in Karnataka

KOLAR, 26 MAY

Four people, including a nine-month-old infant and a 10-year-old boy, were killed in separate road accidents in Karnataka on Tuesday. In Belagavi district, Mahantesh Mane, 27, his wife Payal Mane, 23, and their infant son Samart died after their motorcycle allegedly collided head-on with a mini goods rickshaw near Raibag railway station road. Their daughter Chaitanya sustained serious injuries and is undergoing treatment, police said. In Kolar district, 10-year-old Mujmil, a Bengaluru resident, was killed after a car travelling on the Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway near Lakshmisagara village rammed into a divider. Four others suffered minor injuries. —*SALAR NEWS*

Vijay asks PM to reject DKS' 'illegal' Mekedatu DPR

CHENNAI, 26 MAY

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to instruct officials concerned to reject the Detailed Project Report (DPR) prepared by the Karnataka government over the Mekedatu project, even as State Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said the government was in the process of filing the DPR.

In a letter to the PM, Vijay expressed surprise that Ministry of Jal Shakti and the CWC had entertained Karnataka's proposal for the dam without considering Tamil Nadu's plea. He alleged that the project contravened the final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) and also the Supreme Court judgment, adding that the project was a "blatant violation of the existing environmental laws".

"Tamil Nadu is of the firm view that by proposing a new Mekedatu Project with a storage capacity of 67.16 TMC just upstream of the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border, Karnataka is attempting to prevent the flows generated in the uncontrolled catchment... which are to be ensured to Tamil Nadu, according to... the Supreme Court," he said.

Vijay argued that the Mekedatu project was not among the schemes permitted by the CWDT, which was later upheld by the Supreme Court in its 16 February, 2018 judgment.

He said the Cauvery basin had already been classified as a deficit basin and the available water at 50 per cent dependability had been fully allocated among the states, leaving no scope for creating a storage reservoir. He contended that any new project across the Cauvery or its tributaries, without approval from the Tribunal, would amount to interference with the Supreme Court judgment.

Vijay argued that an upper riparian state cannot take actions affecting scheduled water deliveries to lower riparian states.

"Advise Karnataka not to take up any new project without getting the concurrence of co-basin states and not to violate the court verdict," Vijay stated. —*PTI*

Contractor firm booked for Bowring wall collapse

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

Nearly a month after the devasting Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital wall collapse in Bengaluru that claimed seven lives, an FIR was registered against a Chennai-based contractor firm, officials said on Tuesday.

The case was filed against ASR Traders at the Commercial Street police station on 20 May under charges of causing death by negligence, following a complaint by Chandru SD, Executive Engineer in the Health and Family Welfare Engineering Wing.

A technical committee was constituted to investigate the incident, where at least seven people were killed during heavy rains in April, and the inquiry found that ASR Traders had been entrusted with demolition and debris removal work on 1 July, 2017, for the construction of a new building at the Bowring building, the complaint stated.

An inquiry found that the Chennai-based contractor firm was supposed to demolish the wall as early as 2017, but didn't —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

However, the committee found that the contractor failed to scientifically dispose of the demolition debris and left construction waste at the site, which is believed to have contributed to the incident.

A notice was issued to the firm on 14 May, 2026, seeking an explanation by 18 May, but no response was received, police added. Following directions from the Chief Secretary of the State government, a complaint was filed. —*PTI*

Teen worker dies when clearing rainwater as wall collapses in City

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

A 17-year-old worker has died, and another sustained injuries after a compound wall at an under-construction apartment building here collapsed on them, police said on Tuesday. The deceased was Bhimesh from Panchamukhi village in Raichur district. The injured worker, 32-year-old Doolayya from Gunjala village, is being treated at a nearby hospital, they said. Police said the incident happened on Monday afternoon at a construction site in Chikkabanasawadi.

Six workers were clearing rainwater and mud that had gathered near the compound wall after recent rains, police said. At around 2pm, the wall suddenly collapsed. Three workers managed to escape safely, but Bhimesh and Doolayya got trapped under the debris. Police registered a case against the building owner at Banaswadi Police Station for causing death due to negligence. —*PTI*

2 boys drown in seepage pond in Kolar

KOLAR, 26 MAY

Two boys drowned in a seepage pond in Malur taluk, Kolar district, on Monday afternoon.

Residents of Kottur village had dug a pond – around five to six feet deep - to provide drinking water to cattle, said Om Prakash, Police Inspector of Masthi police station.

The boys, Vinuth, 10, and Devakiran, 12, who were studying in Class 5 and Class 6 respectively, reportedly entered the pond for a swim at around 3pm. But they got trapped in slush and were unable to come out.

The pond was constructed on land belonging to Venkatesh, whose grandsons were among the victims. The boys were studying in Bengaluru.

Notably, this is the fourth drowning incident reported in Kolar district in the last 20 days. At least nine people have drowned so far, with most of the incidents occurring in "Krishi Hondas" (farm ponds) constructed by farmers.

Kolar Deputy Commissioner Dr Ravi MR had directed farmers to install fencing around farm ponds, but many are yet to comply. —*Salar News*

ROW OVER IDOL

FIR filed against 18 in Bhatkal Maranakatte dispute

KARWAR, 26 MAY

An FIR has been registered against 18 persons at the Bhatkal Town Police Station for alleged unlawful assembly and protesting over the ongoing Maranakatte dispute in front of the police station in Bhatkal.

The dispute pertains to relocation of a traditional religious structure known as "Maranakatte," situated in the middle of the National Highway 66 in Udupi district. Differences reportedly emerged between two communities on the issue of relocation of the structure.

Police have been deployed at the site to maintain peace since 2021.

According to the complaint, on 24 May, 2026, the said structure- a platform- was removed amid objections by members of one community.

Condemning the action, a group led by Nagesh Krishnappa Naik and Srinivas Mastappa Naik allegedly gathered at the police station around 10.30pm the same night and protested.

A group allegedly objected to shifting the Maranakatte idol, and protested at Bhatkal Town Police Station, in Udupi district —*SALAR*

The complaint states that the protesters shouted slogans against the police department, declared that they would reconstruct the platform at the same location.

Based on a complaint filed by PSI Thimmappa S, police registered a suo motu case under Sections 189(2), 190, and 292 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, along with Section 35(1)(e) of the Karnataka Police Act, 1963.

Those named in the FIR include Nagesh Krishnappa Naik, Srinivas Mastappa Naik, Mahadev Krishnayya Naik, Parameshwar Honnapppa Naik, Vivek Durgappa Naik, Vinod Venkataramana Naik, Naveen Krishna Naik, among others. —*Salar News*

MAN IGNORES DOG BITE, DIES OF RABIES

BAGALKOT, 26 MAY

A 22-year-old man died while undergoing treatment at a district hospital, after allegedly failing to take timely anti-rabies vaccination following a dog bite incident.

The deceased has been identified as Pradeep Chandrashekhar Halerolli, a resident of Golasangi village in Nidagundi taluk of Vijayapura district.

According to sources, Pradeep had attended the "Mannikeri Chandradevi Jatra" held in Mannikeri village of Bilagi taluk in Bagalkote district in last March. During the event, he was reportedly bitten by a rabid dog. However, he allegedly ignored the incident and did not visit hospital for proper treatment or vaccination.

Later, on May 25, he was admitted to the Bagalkote District Hospital. Despite medical efforts, he succumbed to the infection late at night while undergoing treatment. The incident has created concern among the public and serves as a grim reminder of the importance of immediate vaccination —*Salar News*

WORK TO UPGRADE 7,110KM OF RURAL ROADS TO BEGIN SOON: JARKIHOLI

BELAGAVI, 26 MAY

Under the State government's ambitious "Pragathipatha" scheme, a total 7,110kms roads in rural including of 481.14 kms in Belagavi will be developed across all 18 Assembly constituencies in Belagavi district, PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi affirmed on Tuesday.

After securing financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) recently, the State government approved the scheme that had been stalled for nearly six years. The work is expected to commence shortly, said Jarkiholi at a Zilla Panchayat meeting.

The project will be implemented with 70 per cent funding through external loans and 30 per cent from the State government. Jarkiholi, who is also the Belagavi district in-charge Minister said the it "aims to improve rural roads".

The 7,110km of roads are set to be upgraded across the State at an estimated cost of Rs 5,190 crore. For Belagavi district alone, Rs 349.74 crore has been earmarked for 481.14 km. Tenders for Batch-1 works in the district, covering 230.54 km at a cost of Rs 163.36 crore, are on the KPPP portal until 29 June. —*Salar News*

QUOTE THE DAY

"Our ambition is to become an AI-enabled governance state. We are already witnessing practical applications of AI in governance through initiatives in attendance management, multilingual document summarisation, grievance redressal, language technologies and citizen-facing platforms

—SHALINI RAJNEESH, Chief Secretary

WHEN IT RAINS, IT STAYS

Commuters wade through a waterlogged road near Jnanabharathi Metro Station, Mysuru Road, after the heavy rains pounded the City, on Tuesday. —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

Court acquits SKS Ispat, associates in coal scam

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

A Delhi court has acquitted SKS Ispat and Power Ltd, its managing director Anil Gupta, joint managing director Deepak Gupta, manager Amrit Singh, and director Sudhir Kumar Sahay in a case related to alleged irregularities in the allocation of Chhattisgarh's Vijay Central Coal Block. Special Judge Sunena Sharma stated that the prosecution failed to establish offences of cheating and criminal conspiracy, citing insufficient evidence. The CBI alleged the company made false claims to secure the coal block, but the court found the evidence to be based on conjectures, with no proof of deception or conspiracy. —*PTI*

Former BJD MP Samantaray joins BJP, hails Modi

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Former Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Rajya Sabha MP Debashish Samantaray joined the BJP, expressing admiration for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. He thanked Modi for his blessing and said he would work to strengthen the BJP in Odisha and realise the vision of 'Viksit Bharat'. Samantaray, a long-time associate of Naveen Patnaik, resigned from the BJD and Rajya Sabha, claiming he was being systematically belittled. BJP leaders welcomed him, with Arun Singh stating, "The BJP family is growing with people impressed by Modi's policies." Odisha BJP leader Manohan Samal said Samantaray's induction into the BJP would benefit the party. —*PTI*

Punjab civic polls Cong candidate injured in attack

CHANDIGARH, 26 MAY

A Congress candidate in Raikot was injured after an attack with sharp weapons, as polling for 103 municipal bodies recorded 31.6 per cent voter turnout by noon. Jagdev Singh Jagga was admitted to hospital in Ludhiana. Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring condemned the attack, criticising the law and order situation under the AAP government. Polling began at 8 am and continues till 5pm, with votes to be counted on 29 May. Over 7,500 candidates are contesting across eight municipal corporations, municipal councils, and Nagar Panchayats. Security measures are in place to ensure peace during the elections.—*PTI*

Clashes erupt after Kerala varsity poll results

T'PURAM, 26 MAY

Violence broke out after Kerala University Union election results, with SFI leaders claiming KSU activists attacked their victory procession. Police reported stone-pelting and injuries, including a fractured arm of an SHO. The clashes started during the SFI celebration and spread onto the streets, prompting police to use water cannons and lathi charges. The SFI retained 35 of 37 seats, while KSU won two. MP A A Rahim accused KSU of a planned attack after the procession ended peacefully. Police said protesters refused to disperse, leading to force being used, with stones and wood reportedly used against officers. —*PTI*

Quad to invest $20B in critical minerals

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio calls for free passage through Strait of Hormuz

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

India, Australia, Japan and the US on Tuesday unveiled the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative Framework, pledging to mobilise up to USD 20 billion in government and private sector support to strengthen and secure critical mineral supply chains in the Indo-Pacific region.

The announcement was made shortly after the Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting which saw the partner countries arriving at the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative Framework to support the development of secure critical mineral supply chains, which are essential for advanced technologies.

As per an official statement by the Ministry of External Affairs, through the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative, the partners aim to work together to accelerate the development of diversified and fair critical mineral markets.

The framework sets out key areas for cooperation among the Quad partners on critical mineral supply chains.

This will cover three ambits namely investments and project development; regulatory alignment and the recycle and recovery of critical minerals.

Highlighting a unified stance among Quad partners on maintaining global maritime stability, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong stated that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio updated members on the progress of diplomatic negotiations with Iran over the Strait of Hormuz.

Addressing reporters in New Delhi, Wong underlined the strategic necessity of keeping the vital chokepoint secure.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio also sharply criticised the situation in the Strait of Hormuz, calling for unrestricted maritime passage.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump shared a social media post of the American envoy to India, Sergio Gor, highlighting his leader's praise for Prime Minister Modi.

"President Trump called me tonight. He had a clear message: 'I love Prime Minister Modi. We've never been closer to India. I'm a big, big fan of Prime Minister Modi…'," Gor said in a post on X website on Sunday. — *Agencies*

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Japanese Foreign Minister Motegi and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio addressing a joint press conference in New Delhi on Tuesday —*PTI*

TMC uneasy as its MP Roy flags 'anarchy'

KOLKATA, 26 MAY

The signs of a churning in the TMC after its crushing defeat in the West Bengal assembly elections became more visible on Tuesday, with its senior Rajya Sabha MP Sukhendu Sekhar Roy emerging as the latest leader to strike a discordant note and raise uncomfortable questions over the party's trajectory. With many TMC leaders siding with the BJP, the TMC seems to be headed for a split.

Days after party MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar publicly aired her discontent, Roy, among the party's most seasoned parliamentarians, posted cryptic historical references on X, triggering intense political chatter and adding to indications of unease within the TMC.

Roy wrote on X, "In 44 BC, Roman Emperor Julius Ceaser was stabbed to death in the Senate on the Ides of March. As per Roman calendar, Ides generally meant the 15th of March, May, July and October. But before the Ides of May, the people of West Bengal put an end to the unbearable anarchy."

The post, with its reference to the fall of empires and the "end of unbearable anarchy," sparked speculation.

A week earlier, on 19 May, Roy had written: " Republics fall when profligates thrive and wise are banished from the council. Free thought and its practice are essential in democracy."

He is also learnt to have expressed concern over what he described in private conversations as "institutionalisation of corruption" within the TMC. The remarks assume significance as Roy is no fringe voice within the party.

Meanwhile, in a development likely to deepen chatter about the churn within the TMC, senior TMC MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar and six other MLAs, attended CM Suvendu review meeting at Kalyani. — *PTI*

SIR: NIA nabs 15 for detaining judges

KOLKATA/NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The NIA has arrested 15 protestors in connection with last month's road blockades and the alleged illegal detention of judicial officers engaged in the SIR exercise, officials said on Tuesday. The NIA, which took over the investigation as per the ECI's direction after the SC took suo motu cognisance of the incidents, conducted extensive searches in Malda district on Monday. A total of 15 people were apprehended for their involvement in road blockades and the illegal confinement of judicial officers. — PTI

HC ends protection for TMC's Jahangir

KOLKATA, 26 MAY

The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday vacated the interim protection granted to TMC leader Jahangir Khan.

Seven FIRs have been registered against Khan at the Falta police station in South 24 Parganas district, according to the police.

Justice Partha Sarathi Sen observed that it would be unjust to give protection to Khan only on account of a change in the political scenario.

Justice Sen refused Jahangir Khan's request for extension of interim protection from action by the police. — *PTI*

HEARTY WELCOME

Kerala CM VD Satheesan requested PM Modi to exclude from the State's borrowing limit its share of Rs 5,600 cr spent on acquiring land for NHs—*PTI*

TAMIL NADU POLITICS

1 more AIADMK MLA joins TVK

CHENNAI, 26 MAY

A fourth AIADMK MLA, again from the rebel camp led by C Ve Shanmugam-SP Velumani duo, resigned on Tuesday from the Tamil Nadu Assembly, bringing down the strength of the AIADMK in the 234-member House to 43 from 47.

In a significant development, some senior functionaries, including former ministers Natham R Viswanathan and P Thangamani, from the rebel camp arrived at the residence of AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami here. It was immediately not known why they came to meet the party chief as there were speculations about a possible rapprochement between the two groups.

Another MLA from the rebel camp, Balakrishna Reddy, returned to the Palaniswami camp.

On Tuesday, Ambasamudram MLA Esakki Subaya met Speaker JCD Prabhakar and submitted his resignation letter, shortly after the Palaniswami-led faction called on the latter with a plea not to accept the resignation of three AIADMK legislators who had stepped down on 25 May.

Prabhakar later said the resignation of Subaya was accepted.

Subsequently, Subaya joined the TVK at the party headquarters in Panayur, where he was welcomed by TVK general secretary and minister N Anand.

Congress MP S Jothimani expressed concern over the "horse-trading" in Tamil Nadu, and said her party should not support such moves by the TVK since the Congress itself has been at the receiving end of such things.

TVK leader and Revenue Minister KA Sengottaiyan denied the horse-trading allegations. — *PTI*

I have been watching Tamil Nadu politics and how they managed things. They just put up cut-outs and won. Even though I struggled on the road for 15 years, they still managed to come out ahead in such a way that it left me envious.

-Pawan Kalyan, Andhra DyCM

A scuffle erupted between VCK and DMK workers—*PTI*

VCK, DMK activists clash at Kunnam bus stand in TN

PERAMBALUR, 26 MAY

Activists of the VCK and DMK clashed with each other when they gathered in large numbers to stage protests at the Kunnam bus stand here on Tuesday.

Police had initially denied permission to both parties to stage protests, but they gathered near the bus stand.

A scuffle erupted between Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi activists and DMK workers.

Police intervened to separate the clashing activists and dispersed them, a senior official said.

The two parties have been at loggerheads after the VCK joined the TVK Cabinet led by Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay. — *PTI*

Scrap new CBSE rule, says Annamalai

CHENNAI, 26 MAY

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader K Annamalai on Tuesday urged the Union Education Ministry to roll back its recent notification making three languages compulsory for class IX students from the current academic year, and instead stick to its previous commitment to introduce them from the academic year 2029-30.

On 15 May, 2026, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) issued the notification to all affiliated schools, advancing the deadline.

"Expecting a class IX student to learn a new language at such short notice will only pressurise children," said the former state BJP President on X. —*PTI*

Kerala launches 'Project Zero' to eradicate corruption

T'PURAM, 26 MAY

Kerala Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala announced the launch of 'Project Zero', a comprehensive anti-corruption initiative aimed at eliminating corruption across all levels of government with public participation and enhanced vigilance measures. Addressing reporters at the Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (VACB) headquarters, he stated that the government's goal was to transform Kerala into a completely corruption-free state.

Chennithala assured that systems would be introduced for the public to report corruption incidents confidentially, emphasising that vigilance authorities would closely monitor corrupt officials and leaders, warning, "nobody involved in corruption would be spared."

Recognising the rise of cybercrimes and digital corruption, he said strong measures would be taken to prevent that. He said the 1969 Vigilance Manual would be revised to meet modern requirements, with a draft already prepared. He said that more trap cases would be registered as part of intensified anti-corruption efforts. — *PTI*

AFTER NIJJAR'S KILLING

Carney's India visit reset ties: Goyal

OTTAWA, 26 MAY

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's recent visit to India has helped pave the way for a complete reset of Canada-India relations, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said here.

The ties were strained under Carney's predecessor after the 2023 killing of a Sikh activist in Canada.

The remarks by Goyal on Monday, who is visiting Canada, came as he met with the North American country's International Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu.

Around 100 senior business representatives from India's mining, energy, automotive and aerospace sectors accompanied Goyal, a team New Delhi says is its largest-ever business delegation to Canada.

He said Carney's visit in late February "completely changed the way Canada and India looked at each other."

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal during a recent meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney in Canada. —*PTI*

"It has set in motion the pathway to a complete overhaul of this relationship, setting new agendas, new goals," he said. Canada and India have been holding trade talks since 2010. Talks were stopped in 2023 after Canadian authorities alleged that India was involved in the killing of Canadian Sikh activist Hareep Singh Nijjar near Vancouver in June 2023. Ahead of his meeting with Sidhu, Goyal said both countries are keen to reach a free-trade agreement this year. In India, Carney met Indian Prime Minister Modi and the two sides signed a series of agreements, including a deal worth 2.6 billion Canadian Dollars (USD 1.9 billion) to supply about 22 million pounds of uranium to India for nuclear power generation. — *PTI*

'TO CHECK ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION'

Panel on demographic change set up

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

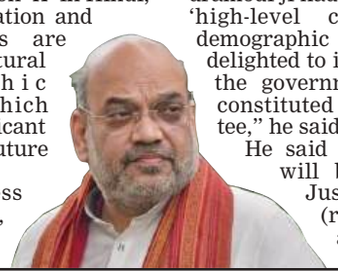
Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday that the Centre has constituted a high-level committee on demographic change under retired Supreme Court Justice Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar for a "comprehensive assessment of demographic changes across India due to illegal immigration and other unnatural causes."

In a message on 'X' in Hindi, he said infiltration and other reasons are causing unnatural demographic change, which poses a significant challenge to future of any nation.

"To address this challenge, on 15 August 2025, Prime Minister @narendramodi ji had announced the 'high-level committee on demographic change'. I am delighted to inform you that the government has now constituted this committee," he said.

He said the committee will be chaired by Justice Naolekar (retd) and will also include the census commissioner, along with retired IAS Durga Shankar Mishra, retired IPS Balaji Srivastava and Dr Shamika Ravi as members.

"The joint secretary (foreigners-l), Ministry of Home Affairs, will serve as the member secretary of this committee," he said. He emphasised that demographic change is a serious issue linked to national security. — PTI



Red Fort blast: Umer used fake ID to buy chemicals to make explosives

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The NIA found that the key accused in the Delhi Red Fort car blast case used a fake identity to procure chemicals for manufacturing explosives, official sources said on Tuesday.

The prime accused, Dr Umer Un Nabi, who was driving the explosives-laden car and died in the blast, researched offline and online articles about various chemicals and had set up a makeshift lab in his flat at the Al Falah University in Faridabad for carrying out experiments with the objective of manufacturing a prototype explosive, the sources said.

The NIA got hold of a delivery challan dated 25 September 2024 from a small Mumbai trader that cracked open the supply chain for procuring materials needed for making explosives.

The challan was issued by the trader for a customised mixed metal oxide (MMO)-coated titanium anode, a specialised electrode used in the electrolysis process that the accused needed for their chemistry experiments.

The electrolysis was carried out at Umer's flat for making chlorates and perchlorates from a common salt solution, a technique that he learnt through research.

Chlorates and perchlorates are explosive substances used in fireworks.

Although it was Umer who purchased the anode, the buyer's name and mobile number mentioned on the challan were those of someone else.

Umer had created a fake identity using the mobile number in the name of "Mr Rahul Bhat" on the IndiaMART commercial platform, and posted his "product of interest as a fertiliser bag, acetone solvent, anode and chemicals, etc."

He contacted the Mumbai shop owner in August 2024 and paid Rs 25,000 through PhonePe, the NIA chargesheet said. — *PTI*

— FREEPIK

Autorickshaw driver killed over Rs 600 in Aligarh

ALIGARH, 26 MAY

A dispute over an alleged overdue payment of Rs 600 led to the death of a middle-aged three-wheeler driver who, along with his wife, was allegedly assaulted by three persons in Aligarh, police said on Tuesday. The incident took place late Monday night near the Sarsol outpost under the Bannadevi police station area. According to Superintendent of Police (City) Aditya Bansal, the deceased, identified as Yameen, was unwell and was on his way to a hospital with his wife, Salma, when he approached his neighbour, Anis, for payment of Rs 600 allegedly owed to him.A case of murder has been registered against Anis, Munees, and Nafis, all of whom are absconding, the police officer further added. —*PTI*

Bihar asks govt staff to visit tourist sites every 3 months

PATNA, 26 MAY

The Bihar government has mandated all state employees to visit tourist destinations every three months with their families, submitting reports to promote sites. In a letter dated 20 May, Additional Chief Secretary B Rajender instructed employees to travel for two days and two nights to districts other than their own, visiting at least three locations over Fridays and Saturdays. He emphasised Bihar's rich cultural, environmental, and historical sites that could become major tourism hubs. Employees are instructed not to conduct review meetings during these trips. Reports with photos and experiences will be submitted to district authorities. The initiative aims to boost local economies and cultural engagement, with travel recognised as official duty.—*PTI*

Family of missing CRPF constable calls for CBI probe

SERAIKELA, 26 MAY

The family of CRPF Constable Badal Murmu, missing for over three years, has called for a CBI investigation, urging the government to find him or declare him dead. Badal went missing from Kiriburu camp, Saranda forest, on 6 January 2023; his family suspects Maoist abduction. His wife, Jhano Murmu, said they've sought a probe from senior officials, including the Home Minister and President, but to no avail. She explained they survive on Rs 13,000 monthly pension, insufficient for their family. Badal had spoken to his wife before disappearing, and villagers reportedly saw him with Maoists. His brother alleged officials declared him a deserter. Police are investigating, but no further comments have been made.—*PTI*

9-year-old Dalit girl gangraped by 2 minors in UP

BALLIA, 26 MAY

A nine-year-old Dalit girl was allegedly gang-raped by two minor boys from her village in the Haldi area of Ballia district, police said on Tuesday.

An FIR was lodged based on a complaint filed by the girl's father, a resident of a village under Haldi police station limits, they said. According to the complaint, the accused allegedly lured the girl with a bribe and sexually assaulted her on the evening of 23 May while she was grazing goats outside the village. Bairia Deputy Superintendent of Police Mohammad Fahim Qureshi said that the two accused boys are 11 to 12 years old and were known to the girl. Based on the complaint, a case was registered on Monday against the two boys under Section 70(2) of the BNS.—*PTI*

WB anti-infiltration drive triggers 'reverse exodus'

Many alleged B'deshi infiltrators were seen near the border

KOLKATA, 26 MAY

West Bengal's BJP government's decision to launch district-level holding centres for suspected illegal immigrants appears to have triggered a fresh "reverse exodus" through the international border in the state.

Scores of alleged Bangladeshi infiltrators were reportedly seen gathering at the Hakimpur checkpoint in North 24 Parganas seeking to return home in Bangladesh.

The renewed rush comes days after Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari announced that West Bengal would aggressively implement a "detect, delete and deport" policy against infiltrators.

Large bags, rolled-up blankets and plastic sheets had returned to the Hakimpur border crossing on Tuesday, reviving a scene witnessed during the SIR exercise. For many in West Bengal's border areas, the visuals felt like a replay.

A viral video shows people waiting to leave Bengal. West Bengal now has 'holding centres' for alleged Bangladeshis —*SCREENCRAB*

Meanwhile, in Kolkata, three suspected Bangaleshi infiltrators have been lodged at the newly created 'holding centre' in West Bengal's Murshidabad district for illegal foreign nationals, officials said on Tuesday. On Monday, Malda became the first district in the state to set up a 'holding centre', where nine suspected Bangladeshis have been housed.

A senior police officer said the 'holding centre' at Lalgola in Murshidabad is now operational, with three "Bangladeshi nationals" currently lodged at the facility under tight security.

Speaking to reporters after an administrative meeting in Kalyani Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari claimed that the people assembled at the border point were willing to return to Bangladesh.

"Jaldi jaldi bhago nahi toh jo karna hai sarkar karega (Quickly leave, otherwise the government will take necessary action)," Adhikari said, referring to the gathering at the border point, while directing officials to ensure that those present are sent back to their country at the earliest. "We do not want to feed them in jails or waste public money on them," the West Bengal Chief minister said after the meeting. —*PTI*

Several onion farmers staged a protest against the government's procurement prices in Nashik. —*ANI*

Nashik ryots stir over onion MSP

NASHIK, 26 MAY

Several onion farmers, led by opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) leaders, on Tuesday staged a protest against the government's procurement prices, blocking the busy Mumbai-Agra National Highway in Nashik district.

Police intervened and detained protesters after the 'Kanda Utpadak Shetkari Kranti Mahamorcha' disrupted traffic in Chandwad town, where some agitators reportedly attempted to deflate the tyres of vehicles stranded on the highway.

Opposition leader, including NCP(SP) MLA Rohit Pawar, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Ambadas Danve, and Congress state president Harshvardhan Sapkal, led the rally on a bullock cart before being detained by the police.

During the agitation, Pawar said, "The government has declared a Rs 1,580 per quintal price for onions. Farmers are unhappy with this. They should get Rs 24 per kg price for onions. The government is afraid of our agitation. The CM, deputy CM and other ministers will go to Delhi on Wednesday. We will have to wait and see what happens."

Interestingly, Melody toffees were distributed to agitating farmers during the protest.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently gifted Melody toffees to Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. As a result, the shares of Parle Industries rose. He should gift onions so that their prices also soar," the agitators said.

Onion cultivators in Nashik have demanded a Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Rs 3,000 for the bulb. They have also sought Rs 1,500 per quintal subsidy for produce which has been sold, rollback of the export ban, and a detailed and impartial inquiry into the corruption in the onion procurement by the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED). —*PTI*

NO OUTBREAK, SAYS GOVT

5 lions dead in Gir; 2 cubs succumb to viral infection

AHMEDABAD, 26 MAY

Two lion cubs died due to suspected Babesia virus infection in Gujarat's Gir forest, while three others died due to natural causes and fighting, state Forest Minister Arjun Modhwadia said on Tuesday.

Modhwadia, however, ruled out the possibility of any major epidemic outbreak in the Gir forest, the last home of Asiatic lions.

"In view of reports claiming lions died from the Babesia virus, only two suspected lion deaths have been attributed to this viral infection. The remaining (three) lion deaths occurred either due to fighting or other reasons," he said in a statement.

Babesia virus spreads through ticks and can cause weakness, coughing and nasal discharge in affected animals.

"Forest officials and veterinary doctors are trying to stop the Babesia virus spreading," Modhwadia said.

The authorities are identifying infected lions, collecting samples and providing treatment, while steps are also being taken to remove ticks from animals.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Jaipal Singh said the deaths were isolated incidents —*ANI*

- Only two suspected lion deaths have been attributed to this viral infection. The remaining three deaths occurred either due to fighting or other reasons

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Jaipal Singh, who holds additional charge as the Head of the Forest Force, said the deaths were isolated incidents.

"Such incidents happen as the survival rate of cubs is generally only 50 per cent. However, due to veterinary facilities, surveillance and trackers, we have been able to keep mortality rate very low," Singh said. The 2025 census recorded 891 Asiatic lions in Gujarat. —*PTI*

4 held for kidnapping Naga civilians in Manipur

IMPHAL, 26 MAY

Four persons were apprehended in Manipur's Kangpokpi district for their suspected involvement in the abduction of six Naga civilians, who are allegedly still being held hostage, police said on Tuesday.

A joint team of the Manipur Police, CRPF and Assam Rifles arrested the four men from the stretch between P Molding and Leilon Vaiphei inter-village road on Monday, they said.

The arrested persons were identified as Thangkhomang Khongsai (51), Seikholet Khongsai (40), Lunminthang Dimngel (27) and Kamgoulal Khongsai (30).

Police said the four are suspected to be active members of armed village volunteer groups operating in the district and may have been involved in anti-social activities such as extortion, criminal intimidation, and illegal possession of arms and ammunition.

"The role of the apprehended individuals in the abduction of six persons is suspected and will be ascertained during the course of investigation," a police statement said, adding that further investigation is underway. Several people were allegedly abducted and taken hostage by armed groups. —*PTI*

No forceful takeover of Delhi Gymkhana: Govt

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Centre will not take over forcibly Delhi Gymkhana Club Land on 5 June, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the Delhi High Court on Tuesday.

Following the submission, Justice Avneesh Jhingan said no interim order was required on the lawsuits by members and staff of the club against the Centre's 22 May order asking the club to hand over its premises.

The SG submitted before Justice Jhingan that the Centre's notice to the club was intended to terminate the perpetual lease in favour of the club.

However, eviction proceedings will be initiated as per law only after giving notice to the occupants, the SG said.

The judge issued summons to the Centre and the club's management seeking their written statements.

Mehta also said that the club's governing body, which comprises nominees of the Centre, has already written to the authorities about their grievances.

The Centre had asked the Gymkhana Club to hand over the premises, saying that the 27.3-acre plot was required for "strengthening defence infrastructure."

STAY QUASHED

Delhi High Court also set aside eviction order against Delhi Race Club for its 84-acre premises in Lutyens' Delhi. — *PTI*

SC BINS PLEA SEEKING COW SLAUGHTER BAN

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to grant urgent hearing of a PIL seeking effective implementation of the law imposing a complete ban on cow slaughter ahead of Bakrid.

"You remembered this a day before. No urgency. Thanks," said a bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi.

Advocate Barun Kumar Sinha mentioned the matter before the bench seeking urgent hearing.

"Day after tomorrow is Bakrid. This is a plea to seek implementation of anti-cow slaughter law. If this can be listed tomorrow," Sinha said.

The plea, filed by Satish Kumar Aggarwal, seeks directions to enforce anti-slaughter laws to protect the cow and its progeny. —*PTI*

Rape-accused Ram Rahim gets 16th parole

CHANDIGARH, 26 MAY

Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, serving a 20-year sentence for raping two women disciples, walked out of Sunaria jail in Rohtak on Tuesday morning after being granted a 30-day parole

This is the 16th time that the controversial Dera Sacha Sauda chief had been released from prison since his conviction in 2017.

The Dera chief will stay at his Sirsa-headquartered Dera during the parole period, said Dera spokesperson and advocate Jitender Khurana.

His latest release comes months after he was granted a similar parole in January. Before that, he was out on a 40-day parole in August 2025, a 21-day furlough in April 2025 and a 30-day parole in January 2025 ahead of the 5 February Delhi assembly polls.

He was also granted a 20-day parole on 1 October, 2024, days before the 5 October Haryana assembly polls. a 21-day furlough in August 2024, and a three-week furlough in February 2022, barely two weeks before the Punjab assembly polls.

SGPC earlier had opposed such parole. —*PTI*

MARINE LIFE IN DANGER

Climate change may weaken lake's purification process: Study

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Climate change could weaken a lake's natural purification process during which microorganisms convert nitrogen compounds into nitrogen gas that is then released to the atmosphere and effectively removed from the biosphere, a new study has found.

About 20 per cent of natural nitrogen removal in inland waters is attributable to the process of 'denitrification', researchers, led by those from the University of Basel in Switzerland and Eawag, Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology, said.

For the study, published in the journal Nature Microbiology, the team collected samples from Lake Baldegg in the Lucerne Lake District in Switzerland.

The 5.3-square-kilometre lake is typical of many lakes in our latitudes, where the water completely mixes once a year, the researchers said.

They showed that denitrification activity is closely linked to seasonal mixing. In winter, the three layers of water in Lake Baldegg mix completely -- the warm, oxygen-rich surface water, the transition zone, and the cold, oxygen-poor deep water.

Ability of lakes to remove nitrogen from the water is dependent on seasons and this is being altered by climate change —*AI*

During mixing, denitrification is nearly 50 per cent more active than during summer stratification (separation).

"The ability of lakes to remove nitrogen from the water is highly dependent on the season. And this is being altered by climate change," lead author Cameron Callbeck, postdoctoral researcher at the University of Basel, said.

In a severe warming scenario, the winter mixing phase could shorten by about 27 days. "However, we don't yet know why denitrification occurs particularly in winter," Callbeck said. —*PTI*

CIC flags persistent crisis of suicides in IIT campuses

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Observing a "persistent crisis" of suicides across IIT campuses, the Central Information Commission (CIC) has recommended the constitution of high-level committees at the institutes to address factors contributing to such deaths, underlining the "dire need" for corrective measures. The recommendation of the CIC came while hearing a batch of appeals after the IITs refused to disclose details of suicide case victims at IIT Madras, IIT Jodhpur, IIT Goa and IIT Kanpur.

Information Commissioner Sudha Rani Relangi said there is a "persistent crisis" of multiple suicides annually across IIT campuses, with a "high concentration" at institutions such as IIT Kanpur and IIT Kharagpur, and there was a "dire need" for universities to set up panels to address such incidents. —*PTI*

CBSE portal saw no glitch in 72 hrs: IIT Madras head

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

IIT Madras Director V Kamakoti on Tuesday said a four-member team from the institute and IIT Kanpur has begun examining the recent glitches in the CBSE portal, including payment failures and allegations related to answer sheet uploads.

In an exclusive interview with PTI, Kamakoti said the team started examining the issue on Monday evening and the primary focus is to determine the exact cause of the disruption.

"There was an issue for around two days. So what was the actual reason for the failure? Was it some development issue, technical issue, or was it even a cyber attack? So that is what we want to basically find out," he said.

He also said the Central Board of Secondary Education's (CBSE) portal had remained stable for the last "72 hours-plus". Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday directed IIT Madras and IIT Kanpur to depute experts to assist the CBSE in ensuring a glitch-free re-evaluation process. —*PTI*

IIT Madras Director Kamakoti said CBSE's move to introduce the On-Screen Marking (OMS) is aimed at increasing transparency —*ANI*

SURYA KIRAN TEAM TURNS 30

The Indian Air Force's elite Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team on Tuesday completed 30 years of aerial displays with a special air show in Bidar, Karnataka, where the squadron was formed in 1996. The red-and-white Hawk Mk-132 jets have performed over 800 aerobatic displays across 72 cities in India and abroad, including in China, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia
— PTI

Fuel price hikes may push inflation to 5%: Economists

These price hikes will directly cascade into impacting prices in sectors where petrol and diesel are used as inputs such as transport and storage and to some extent electricity *—AI*

- With the fuel price hikes beginning mid-May, the CPI inflation print for May is expected to show uptick

Fuel price hikes and higher import duties on gold and silver could push retail inflation to 5 per cent by June, but the RBI will wait and watch till the impact of fuel price hike settles in before tightening interest rates in the second half of the fiscal year, economists said.

Over a period of 11 days, starting 15 May, petrol prices have been increased by Rs 7.38/ltr and diesel prices by Rs 7.48/ltr with some inter-city variation. These price hikes will directly cascade into impacting prices in sectors where petrol and diesel are used as inputs such as transport and storage and to some extent electricity.

Besides, the government on 13 May had hiked import duty on gold and silver to 15 per cent to curb non-essential imports.

"After an overall increase averaging about Rs 7.5/ltr in petroleum products, CPI inflation would go up by about 75 basis points. In May 2026, CPI inflation may thus be in the range of 4-4.5 per cent and June CPI may be in the range of 4.5-5 per cent," EY India Chief Policy Advisor D K Srivastava told PTI.

The CPI inflation data for May is scheduled to be released on 12 June.

"Since the increase in CPI is cost driven, adjustments in repo rate may have limited effect in containing inflation. RBI may like to wait until the fuel price hike settles down and examine its impact over a quarter before taking a decision. However, If CPI inflation crosses the level of 5 per cent and shows upward momentum, RBI may start tightening interest rates," Srivastava said.

India Ratings & Research Director Megha Arora said she expects June CPI to surpass 4 per cent but remain within the RBI's upper tolerance band of 6 per cent.

Economists expect the RBI's monetary policy committee (MPC) to persist with its "neutral pause" in the 5 June meeting, keeping all policy rates unchanged.

Since the last MPC policy announcement on April 8, but WPI inflation has flared up to 42-month high of 8.3 per cent in April, reflecting the global commodity price pressures. With inadequate passthrough, retail or consumer price index (CPI) based inflation rose modestly to 3.48 per cent in April.

With the petrol, diesel price hikes beginning mid-May, the CPI inflation print for May is expected to show uptick with full impact being visible in June CPI inflation.

The RBI mainly takes into account CPI inflation while deciding on monetary policy rates.

"While we believe there will be no policy rate action in June, we are incrementally getting worried that as this uncertain backdrop lingers, spillover effects to transportation fare, other raw material costs and finally output prices may make inflation outcome in 2HFY27 (October-March) difficult to digest, necessitating a rate hike," Barclays India Chief Economist Aastha Gudwani said.

In the April 2026 Monetary policy report, the RBI's base case assumed crude oil at USD85/bbl for its growth and inflation forecasts. With reality decisively shifting to the USD95/bbl scenario, Barclays expects the RBI to revise its FY27 inflation forecast from 4.6 per cent to 5 per cent and cut its growth forecast to 6.7 per cent (from 6.9 per cent) after the June 5 MPC meeting.

India Ratings & Research Director Megha Arora said based on the four fuel price hikes so far, June CPI inflation is likely to be higher by around 38 bps, with an upside risk from further passthrough. June CPI is likely to surpass 4 per cent but remain within RBI's upper tolerance band of 6 per cent.

The RBI has the mandate to keep inflation at 4 per cent with a tolerance band of 2 per cent on either side.

Crisil Principal Economist Dipti Deshpande said the rating agency expects average inflation at 5.1 per cent in current fiscal year.

"Inflationary pressures at present are largely supply-driven, stemming from elevated fuel and input costs, along with a weaker rupee. As such, the MPC may choose to look through these supply-side pressures in its policy assessment. However, the committee is likely to remain watchful of the risk of spillovers to household inflation expectations, and the possibility of second-round effects leading to broader generalisation of price pressures," Deshpande said.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said the fuel price hike will have a minor impact on the May CPI inflation figure, but transmit more widely into the number for June.

"We now forecast the FY27 baseline CPI inflation at 5 per cent, presuming crude oil averages USD 95/barrel. We do not expect an immediate rate hike in the June 2026 policy review, but expect it to be more backended in H2 FY27," Nayar said. *—PTI*

SALAR ساہر

'Linking AI to job cuts makes no sense'

As Artificial Intelligence continues to disrupt the tech world, one of the most prominent voices in the sector Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang has questioned linking AI to job cuts. Speaking to Channel News Asia, Huang said that the narrative used by some chief executives to link artificial intelligence (AI) with job cuts is "lazy" and "doesn't make any sense".

Huang said he remains optimistic about the future of AI and believes the technology will ultimately create more opportunities rather than reduce jobs.

"The narrative that connects AI to job loss, for many of the CEOs that are doing it - it is just too lazy. AI has just arrived, how is it possible they're already losing jobs?" he told CAN.

Huang further said, "It was just a way for them to sound smart and I really hate that. I think we're scaring people and that's irresponsible."

He did not refer to any specific company while making the remarks.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman too reiterated this. He said that the technology would not lead to a global "jobs apocalypse".

He was speaking virtually at a Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) conference in Sydney on Tuesday.

"I'm delighted to be wrong about this, I thought there would have been more impact on entry-level white-collar jobs being eliminated by now than has actually happened," Altman told CBA Chief Executive Matt Comyn.

"I now think I understand more about why it hasn't, and I'm obviously grateful but that is an area where my intuitions were just off.

"People are like 'oh you could have saved the world a lot of fear mongering and a lot of doom and gloom' but at the time I was like 'I see this is a real risk we should probably talk about it' and it still may."

"I don't think we're going to have the kind of jobs apocalypse that some of the companies in our space advocate or talk about."

Altman's comments come days after Meta fired 8,000 while continuing its push towards AI.

Concerns over AI-related job losses have increased in recent months as several companies announced workforce reductions while expanding investments in artificial intelligence technologies.

According to CNA, last week, Standard Chartered CEO Bill Winters faced criticism after saying the bank was replacing "lower-value human capital" with technology while announcing plans to cut more than 7,000 jobs over the next four years. Winters later apologised for the comments.

CNA stated that, earlier this month, Reuters reported that Meta plans to reduce over 20 per cent of its workforce to offset rising AI investments and improve productivity.

Addressing concerns over AI replacing human jobs, Huang said workers should focus on learning AI tools instead of fearing them.

"You're not going to lose your jobs to AI, you're going to lose your job to somebody who learnt AI better than you," he said.

Comparing AI with earlier technological changes, Huang said people who failed to adapt to computers during the personal computer revolution were left behind, not because PCs took jobs away directly.

"When the PC came along, the PC didn't take people's jobs. The people who didn't learn how to use PCs were left behind," he said.

Huang also said it is "very likely" there will be more jobs in the next five years as companies become more productive and profitable through AI adoption.

"It's more likely that the companies with ambition will be more productive, they will do things faster, their company will increase in velocity. As a result, they become larger, more profitable. When they become larger, more profitable, they'll end up hiring more people," he said. Using Nvidia as an example, Huang said the company is continuing to hire employees, expand operations and move faster with the help of AI-driven innovation.

"The type of things that we used to think were going to take 10 years, I now think are going to take one or two years," he said.

He added that businesses and workers need to engage with emerging technologies to remain competitive.

"If you don't engage with the technology of your time, you will just simply be left behind," Huang said.

—Agencies

> I don't think we're going to have the kind of jobs apocalypse that some of the companies in our space advocate or talk about
> -Sam Altman, OpenAI CEO

> How is it possible that AI became productive and useful only six months ago, and they were somehow laying people off two years ago because of AI? It doesn't make any sense
> -Jensen Huang, Nvidia CEO

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Poor quality virtual education fails Iran's students

While virtual education was initially intended as a temporary solution to allow students to continue their studies during the wartime crisis in Iran, many families and teachers now say that rather than serving as a sustainable substitute for in-person schooling, it has led to a severe decline in the quality of education.

The following report, prepared by HRANA (Human Rights Activists News Agency) based on interviews with students' families, teachers, school administrators, and education experts, examines the deepening crisis of remote education in Iran. The report explores how widespread internet disruptions, inadequate educational infrastructure, limited access to digital equipment, mounting economic pressure on families, and the absence of coherent planning for an uncertain future have severely undermined access to effective education.

Those interviewed said his situation has not only reduced the quality of learning but has also raised serious concerns about students' educational future.

After schools were closed due to wartime conditions, education initially continued through an application called Shad. However, widespread disruptions in the platform forced many schools to move classes to another application called Rubika, a platform which also suffers from numerous problems. Many students say that online classes either fail to open altogether or experience constant interruptions in audio and video during sessions. Some educational files fail to upload, and in certain cases, even sending a simple video or audio file can take hours.

It is around 10 am, and a science class at a middle school has just begun, but the teacher's voice keeps cutting. Students repeatedly write in the class group chat: "We can't hear anything," "The image isn't loading," "The file won't open." A few minutes later, the class becomes inaccessible. One parent says this happens almost every day.

She says many families have been forced to increase spending on internet access and mobile phones.

A high school teacher says some of her students can only join classes using their parents' mobile phones, and if the parents are at work, those students are deprived of attending class that day.

According to her, virtual education in recent weeks has become more like attendance registration than real learning. "Sometimes at the end of class I ask the students if they understood anything. They stay silent. Some of them don't even know what the teacher taught because half the class was disconnected."

Many students say that online classes either fail to open altogether or experience constant interruptions *—AI*

In some households, several students are forced to share a single mobile phone. The father of one student in southern Tehran says: "We have three school-age children, but only one relatively functional phone at home. When their classes are held at the same time, one or two of them are effectively deprived of attending lessons."

Some schools attempted to hold limited in-person classes. However, these decisions were also accompanied by confusion and contradictory restrictions.

Several families say that during meetings, schools asked parents to provide written consent for remedial classes to be held outside the formal school environment, since the Ministry of Education had not authorised in-person classes. One parent of an elementary school student says that during one of these meetings, it was suggested that classes be held at the local mosque or that families collectively rent a location for lessons.

"Some families said they would not allow their children to attend classes in mosques or unspecified places. Everyone is afraid of the situation. Private homes are also completely unsuitable for holding classes for such a large number of students."

> We're not only facing academic decline. Some students have developed feelings of exhaustion, hopelessness, and constant anxiety. For some children, school no longer has the meaning it once did.
> -Educational counsellor in Tehran

> Sometimes it takes half an hour just to enter the class. And when we finally connect, the teacher says there's no time and rushes through the lesson. In the end, we don't understand anything.
> -11th grade student

Following these disagreements, some schools, with the agreement of a number of parents, decided to hold limited classes at centres run by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. However, these classes were also suspended after only a few sessions.

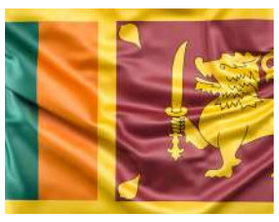
Some teachers say that even school principals often do not know exactly which directives are supposed to be implemented. Circulars change constantly, and decisions are sometimes completely reversed within just a few days.

Some families say their children have lost motivation to study in recent months. The mother of a ninth-grade student says, "At the end of the night, when I ask him what he learned today, he says, 'Nothing, the internet kept disconnecting and the teacher couldn't teach.'"

One elementary school teacher says some of her students are now struggling even with reading and writing, yet will likely still be promoted to the next grade: "A child who still hasn't fully learned this year's lessons is going to move up to the next grade. This problem isn't just about this year, its effects may only become visible years later."

Some psychologists and education activists say the combination of insecurity, prolonged isolation, unstable education, and economic pressure could have long-term effects on students' concentration, motivation, and mental health.

Overall, at a time when the country's formal education system remains caught between closures, virtual learning, and bans on in-person classes, many students are experiencing not education itself, but a state of educational uncertainty, an uncertainty whose real consequences may only become clear years from now. *—HRANA*



– PTI

Lanka raises interest rates amid Iran war

COLOMBO, 26 MAY

Sri Lanka's central bank increased its policy rate by 100 basis points to 8.75 per cent, its first hike in three years. The previous adjustment was in March 2023, when the rate rose from 14.5 to 15.5 per cent. The Standing Deposit Facility Rate and the Standing Lending Facility Rate were also raised to 8.25 per cent and 9.25 per cent, respectively. Global tensions in West Asia have kept commodity prices high, impacting inflation, which was 5.4 per cent in April. External pressures have increased, with a trade deficit driven by fuel imports and a slowdown in tourism. The rupee has depreciated 7.2 per cent since January but has recently stabilised somewhat. *–PTI*

French man pimps girlfriend to 500 men, sentenced

PARIS, 26 MAY

A court in southeastern France on Saturday sentenced a man to 25 years in prison for the rape and torture of his former partner. Guillaume Bucci, 51, was accused of manipulating his ex-partner, Laeticia R, into torture and rape from 2015 to 2022, including by around 500 friends, colleagues and strangers he found online. Laeticia R. suffers from disabilities as a result of the actions and said she had been under Bucci's "psychological control," fearing he would release intimate recordings if she left. Bucci admitted to acts that he claimed had been "consensual" and "in of their intimate relationship." But he admitted to pressuring his ex-partner, who said he had "sold" her into prostitution. *–AGENCIES*

Families with IS links arrive in Australia

MELBOURNE, 26 MAY

An airliner carrying Australian women and children linked to the Islamic State group has landed in Melbourne, despite warnings from the government that they could face charges. A second group is expected to arrive in Sydney later today. The government confirmed seven women and 12 children are returning on Qatar Airways, weeks after a similar group of 13 returned. Three women from the previous flights face slavery and terrorism charges and remain in custody. Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke stated that anyone involved in crimes "can expect to face the full force of the law," emphasising the government's stance on their return. Some remain in Roj camp, near Syria's border, with a mother and daughter barred from returning under exclusion orders. *–PTI*

Brazil commits $617.5M to eco projects in Amazon

SAO PAULO, 26 MAY

Brazil has pledged 3.1 billion reais (USD 617.5 million) to support ecological projects in the Amazon, part of Eco Invest, launched last year at COP30. The funds aim to promote sustainable tourism, infrastructure, and bioeconomy activities based on natural resources. The programme uses blended finance, with the National Treasury lending at 1 per cent interest, and banks mobilising four times that amount, mostly from foreign investors. So far, 140 billion reais (USD 28 billion) has been committed. Environment Minister João Capobianco said Eco Invest supports Brazil's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 by reducing deforestation without harming productivity. The announcement follows recent setbacks in environmental policies, including bills weakening enforcement against illegal deforestation. *–PTI*

Mojtaba touts new Muslim world order

Mojtaba says US will be pushed out, Israel's end is near

TEHRAN, 26 MAY

In a Hajj message on Tuesday, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei extended a sweeping invitation to Muslim nations to collaborate with Tehran, while Israel is approaching its final stages.

"The hands of time will not turn back, and the nations and lands of the region will no longer serve as shields for US bases," Mojtaba stated, according to Press TV.

The US "will no longer have a safe haven for its mischief and for establishing military bases in the region" and was "growing more distant from its former status day by day."

"The future belongs to the Muslim Ummah and the new Islamic civilization," he said.

Separately, in a post on X, he added that "the shaken Zionist regime and the cancerous tumor of Israel are approaching the final stages of their wretched existence".

Notably, Mojtaba's comments come as US President Donald Trump appears to be tying any potential ceasefire deal with Iran to Muslim nations signing onto the Abraham Accords. The Accords deal with establishing diplomatic, economic and security ties between Israel and other countries.

Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei *–x*

- As Trump suggested that Muslim countries join the Abraham Accords, Mojtaba said the future belongs to the Islamic civilisation, implying a new form of world order

However, his comments come as the US launched "defensive" strikes on Iran, with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps saying that at least four members were killed. Iran denounced US strikes a ceasefire violation and a sign of "bad faith and unreliability".

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will leave no act of aggression unanswered," Iran's Foreign Ministry said statement.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard on Tuesday said it had shot down and deterred drones and a fighter jet that entered its airspace, according to Iran's official Mizan news agency.

It wasn't immediately clear what the developments would mean for negotiations, which were underway in Qatar.

Trump, meanwhile, suggested that the US could destroy Iran's "nuclear dust" under the supervision of the United Nation's International Atomic Energy Agency. *—Agencies*

After 3 months, Pezeshkian orders restoration of internet access

TEHRAN, 26 MAY

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has ordered the restoration of internet access across the country after nearly three-months of an imposed blackout, state-run Mehr News Agency reported, citing the head of public relations in Iran's Ministry of Communications.

The nationwide internet blackout was imposed on 8 January, during the bloody protests over the collapsing economy. Internet was gradually restored in February, but cut again on 28 February after the US-Israel launched strikes.

However, the mechanism for how and when Iran would reconnect to the global web is unclear. Even in normal times, internet access is heavily censored in Iran. *—ANI*

Khwaja is not in favour of joining Abraham Accords

ISLAMABAD, 26 MAY

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said that he was not in favour of Islamabad joining the Abraham Accords to normalise relations with Israel, after US President Donald Trump implied that a peace deal with Iran may hinge on several Muslim majority countries signing onto the deal.

"Personally, I don't think we should join any such accord which clashes with our fundamental ideologies," Asif said on Samaa TV on Monday night.

Asif, prominently anti-Israeli, noted Pakistan's long-standing position to not accept Israel until an independent Palestinian state is created within the pre-1967 border.

Pakistan's passports explicitly state that they are valid for all countries except Israel, he said. *— PTI*

Over 3,000 people have been killed in Lebanon so far *–NNA*

Israeli bombs kill 12 in eastern Lebanese village

BEIRUT, 26 MAY

An Israeli airstrike on a village in eastern Lebanon killed 12 people, state media said on Tuesday, as an Israeli official said the military had called up more troops to Lebanon.

The strike hit the village of Mashghara in the Bekaa Valley late on Monday, according to Lebanon's state-run National News Agency.

Rescue workers say that a dozen bodies were pulled out of the rubble following an intense wave of overnight strikes targeting swaths of southern and eastern Lebanon. The attacks come three days before Lebanese and Israeli military delegations are set to meet in Washington for direct talks.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah attacked Israeli troops in southern Lebanon and northern Israeli towns, and has vowed to continue fighting until Israel stops its daily airstrikes and withdraws troops from the country.

These came after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that he had authorised more intensive strikes targeting the Hezbollah militant group across Lebanon. Israel also updated its defensive guidelines, telling people not to gather in large numbers.

"What this requires of us now is to increase the blows, to increase the intensity. We will smite them hip and thigh," Netanyahu said in a video posted on social media on Monday.

Over a million people in Lebanon have been displaced, and 3,185 people killed by Israel. *—PTI*

> **It is time for the Prime Minister (Netanyahu) to bang on Trump's table and inform him that we are returning to war in Lebanon. We need to cut off the electricity in Lebanon, conquer the Dahiyeh, and return to an intense war.**
>
> —Itamar Ben Gvir, Israel National Security Minister

Russia tells foreigners to leave Kyiv; Strikes continue

Rescue workers help an elderly women as Russia launched nearly 100 drones at Kyiv overnight into Tuesday *—UKRAINE EMERGENCY SERVICES*

KYIV, 26 MAY

Russia on Monday urged foreign citizens, including members of diplomatic missions, to leave the Kyiv as quickly as possible and told residents to steer clear of military and government facilities as "systemic strikes" on Kyiv were being prepared.

Then, Russia fired more than 100 drones and two ballistic missiles at Ukraine overnight, the Ukrainian Air Force said on Tuesday.

However, there has been no announcements of diplomatic departures from Kyiv. The European Union, French and Polish delegations publicly said that they would not leave.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told US Secretary of State Marco Rubio by phone Monday that the US should evacuate its diplomatic staff from Kyiv, but it is unclear if this will happen.

The level of security threats posed by Russia to Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities "remains the same as in previous years and months," Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said in a statement late on Monday.

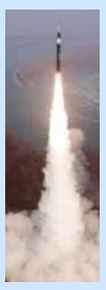
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy noted that sophisticated American-made air defence systems that Ukraine needs to stop Russian ballistic missiles are in short supply due to the Iran war. There has been no progress "for a long time" in expanding production, he said.

However, he claimed that Kyiv was had "stabilised" the 1,250km frontline in eastern and southern Ukraine, suggesting the country was holding its own against Russia. *—PTI*

N Korea launches missiles in latest show of force

SEOUL, 26 MAY

North Korea fired a short-range ballistic missile and other weapons towards the sea on Tuesday, according to South Korea's military. The missile, launched from Jongju near the west coast, flew approximately 80km (50 miles). Reports from South Korean media indicated that multiple rocket launch systems were also mobilised, likely to test the ability to evade South Korean and US defences.



South Korea's military said it closely monitors North Korea's activities and remains prepared to counter any provocations, emphasising its strong alliance with the US.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has focused on modernising his nuclear and missile arsenals. Recently, Kim expanded ties with Russia and China, with Moscow and Beijing expressing opposition to Western pressures at their summit last week. *—PTI*

23 May shooting is proof we need White House ballroom: DoJ

WASHINGTON, 26 MAY

The US Department of Justice has cited the 23 May shootout near the White House to urge a federal judge to drop the case against a new ballroom at the presidential residence.

In a late Sunday court filing, it described the incident as yet another attempt on the life of President Donald Trump, his family and staff, the second in a month.

It added the ballroom will ensure that the President can perform his constitutional duties in a safe and secured facility.

The filing also provided new details of the project's planned security features, which includes missile and drone-proof structures, as well as positions for rooftop snipers and sealed vents to prevent contamination of air inside the East Wing.

The department added it had been "forced" to publicly disclose planned security features "to stave off the court's dangerous injunction."

The March injunction against the ballroom's above-ground construction has been temporarily stayed by the appeals judges, allowing work to continue. *—PTI*

US President Donald Trump touches the White House, saying he is the only one capable of protecting the building *—TRUTHSOCIAL@REALDONALDTRUMP*

China & Pak reaffirm ties on J&K, Iran, Taiwan & Afghan

ISLAMABAD, 26 MAY

China and Pakistan on Tuesday reaffirmed their positions on Jammu and Kashmir, Taiwan, Iran and Afghanistan while stressing closer strategic coordination on regional and global issues. The joint statement was issued after Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's four-day visit to China, during which he met President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang.

Pakistan briefed China on recent developments on Jammu and Kashmir, while Beijing reiterated that the issue should be resolved peacefully through dialogue in line with the UN Charter and bilateral agreements.

Pakistan also reaffirmed its commitment to the "One China" principle and opposed "Taiwan independence".

On West Asia, Pakistan backed President Xi Jinping's proposals for regional peace, while Beijing appreciated Pakistan's role in facilitating a temporary ceasefire between the US and Iran and hosting the Islamabad Talks. They agreed to maintain communication on Afghanistan.

The two pledged to deepen bilateral cooperation under the China-Pakistan All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. They agreed to advance Belt and Road cooperation, accelerate the Karakoram Highway realignment project and convene the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Joint Cooperation Committee meeting soon. *—Agencies*

OPERATE DRONES AND MACHINERY

UAE trained Colombian mercenaries to fight in Sudan, alleges HRW

CAIRO, 26 MAY

The United Arab Emirates trained Colombian mercenaries before sending them to fight alongside the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on Tuesday.

The report is the latest by international rights groups accusing the Gulf monarchy of financially and militarily aiding the RSF that have been accused of committing atrocities amounting to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. However, the UAE denied the latest accusations.

HRW stated that hundreds of Colombian mercenaries were recruited by Abu Dhabi-based Global Security Services Group, chaired by Emirati national Mohammed Hamdan Al-Zaabi. They were trained at a military base in Al Dhafra region and at another facility in Abu Dabhi before being deployed to Sudan.

Colombian mercenaries in Sudan *X@sudanwarmonitor*

The organisation cited an unnamed Colombian mercenary who claimed he trained RSF recruits around Nyala, capital of South Darfur, in April last year and said many were "young children".

HRW also said it verified videos showing apparent Colombian mercenaries fighting alongside RSF forces during the capture of el-Fasher in October. United Nations experts described the attack as bearing "the hallmarks of genocide", with at least 6,000 people killed in three days.

RSF leader Gen Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, acknowledged in February that Colombians helped operate drones and artillery systems.

The RSF was born out of feared Arab Janjaweed militias, that have been accused of ethnic cleansing in Sudan and Chad, and also fought in Yemen under the Saudi-Emirati led coalition. However, the Saudi reportedly backs Sudan government's Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) against the UAE-supported RSF. The civil war, that erupted as a power struggle between the two groups, has pushed the country into what the UN calls the world's largest humanitarian crisis. *—PTI*

HORMUZ CLOSURE CHOKES AID FOR AFGHANISTAN

KABUL, 26 MAY

Afghanistan turned to western neighbour Iran for alternative trade routes when fighting erupted with Pakistan, as the major shipping hub in Karachi has been closed off to Kabul. But the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has hit operations in Iran's Bandar Abbas port, meaning that aid and trade shipments to Afghanistan have had to take a longer route.

Now, supplies must be routed by land through Central Asia, far from any ocean. Instead of being shipped from Dubai to Iran and into Afghanistan, it has been taking a long, circuitous route through Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan and across the Caspian Sea into Turkmenistan, the United Nations' World Food Program (WFP) stated.

WFP's transportation costs have tripled, while its cost of supplements for malnourished mothers and children has jumped by 35 per cent, WFP's Afghanistan director John Aylieff said.

Gul Meer Amini, director of logistics at freight company Etifaq Bamyan International Transport and Trade Forwarding, said the Iran war has dramatically increased costs. Before the war, the cost of renting a container was about $3,000 to $3,600 per shipment but it has now surged to over $7,000. For some goods, it has topped $11,000, he said.

Afghanistan's Commerce and Trade Ministry spokesperson Abdul Salam Jawad said overall price increases in the country was at around 3 per cent. *—PTI*

– COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

17.4 MILLION

people in Afghanistan require urgent food assistance, with 4.9 million women and children expected to need treatment for malnutrition. The refugee crisis has similarly deepened, with the twin wars in Iran and Pakistan.

Rupee falls 47 paise to close at 95.73 against USD

MUMBAI, 26 MAY

The rupee depreciated 47 paise to close at 95.73 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, on renewed geopolitical tensions in West Asia and a rise in crude oil prices.

Forex traders said a strong US dollar and weak domestic markets also pressured the rupee. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.43 against the US dollar, and touched an intra-day high of 95.33 and a low of 95.76 against the American currency.On Monday, the rupee gained 34 paise to close at 95.26 against the US dollar with the RBI selling dollars and keeping the rupee well bid at all upper levels. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold falls Rs 2,800 to Rs 1.62 L/10g amid Iran war

MUMBAI, 26 MAY

Gold prices fell by Rs 2,800 to Rs 1.62 lakh per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday as uncertainty surrounding US-Iran tensions strengthened the US dollar and kept investors cautious.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, gold of 99.9 per cent purity declined to Rs 1,62,400 per 10g, down from Monday's Rs 1,65,200. Analysts said the absence of progress in diplomatic talks between Washington and Tehran led traders to avoid aggressive positions. Silver, however, rose Rs 2,000 to Rs 2,73,000 per kg. In global markets, spot gold slipped nearly 1 per cent to USD 4,534.69 per ounce, while silver fell over 2 per cent. Fresh US strikes on southern Iran and Tehran's claim of downing a US drone added to market uncertainty, while investors now await key US inflation and GDP data for further direction.*—PTI*

Nomura, Capital Group buy 5.3% stake in Premier

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Global financial firms including Nomura Asset Management and Capital Group have bought a 5.3 per cent stake in renewable energy firm Premier Energies for Rs 2,291 crore via open market deals.

Following the purchase, Premier Energies' shares rose over 3 per cent to Rs 1,017.90 on the NSE. Other foreign investors involved include Canada's Public Sector Pension Investment Board, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, and Al Mehwar Commercial Investments LLC—an affiliate of Abu Dhabi Investment Council, owned by Mubadala Investment Company. Domestic investors, such as Quant Mutual Fund, Bajaj Finserv MF, and Kotak MF, also bought shares along with insurance firms including HDFC Life, SBI Life, and Kotak Life. The investors purchased 2,39,85,197 shares at an average Rs 955 each, totalling Rs 2,290.59 crore. *—PTI*

Mkts snap 2-day rally to end lower as oil prices spike

Sensex drops 480 pts; Crude surges 3% to $98.9

MUMBAI, 26 MAY

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower in volatile trade on Tuesday as rising crude oil prices and escalating tensions in the Middle East weighed on investor sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 479.26 points, or 0.63 per cent, to settle at 76,009.70 after plunging nearly 580 points during intra-day trade. The NSE Nifty also declined 118 points, or 0.49 per cent, to close at 23,913.70.

Market sentiment weakened after Brent crude prices surged nearly 3 per cent to $98.96 a barrel following fresh US military operations in southern Iran. The sharp rebound in crude prices once again emerged as a major pressure point for Indian equities.

Analysts warned that higher oil prices could revive concerns over imported inflation, fiscal pressure and a widening current account deficit for India, which is heavily dependent on crude imports. The rupee depreciated sharply by 47 paise to close at 95.73 against the US dollar.

Financial and banking stocks led the market decline. Among the biggest Sensex laggards were Bharti Airtel, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finance, Titan Company and HDFC Bank. On the other hand, Tech Mahindra, Maruti Suzuki and Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone were among the gainers.

Among sectoral indices, consumer durables, realty, hospitals and PSU banks ended lower, while utilities, metal, power and capital goods stocks advanced.

The BSE MidCap and SmallCap indices also closed marginally higher. *—PTI*

IN GUJARAT

Adani unveils world's largest battery storage system

AHMEDABAD, 26 MAY

The company said the 3.37 GWh BESS can store enough clean energy to power nearly one million homes *—X/ADANIGROUP*

- The company said utility-scale battery storage is emerging as critical infrastructure globally as renewable energy adoption accelerates, helping address variability in renewable power generation by storing excess energy and supplying it during peak demand periods.

Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) announced on Tuesday the commissioning of a cumulative 3.37 Gigawatt-hour (GWh) Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at Khavda in Gujarat, making it the world's largest single-location battery storage facility outside China and among the fastest utility-scale projects executed globally.

The company said the deployment, completed before 10 months of commencement of on-site construction, includes the 1.37 GWh capacity commissioned in March 2026, taking AGEL's total battery energy storage capacity at Khavda to 3.37 GWh.

The large-scale battery storage system is expected to strengthen grid reliability, support peak-hour electricity supply and enable renewable energy to provide round-the-clock clean power.

AGEL said it plans to add over 10 GWh of battery storage capacity in FY27 and scale this up to 50 GWh in the next five years.

The company said the 3.37 GWh BESS can store enough clean energy to power nearly 1 million homes for an entire day and support the peak electricity demand of cities like Indore and Chandigarh, or even entire Goa.

Sagar Adani, Executive Director, AGEL, said, "Large-scale energy storage will play a defining role in the next phase of India's clean energy transition. As renewable energy capacity scales up rapidly, storage infrastructure becomes critical for The BESS project integrates advanced energy management systems with lithium-ion battery technology to optimise efficiency, reliability and grid responsiveness. *— ANI*

Tata board discusses IPO listing amid leadership tiff

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran leaves after attending the meeting of Tata Sons Group, in Mumbai *—PTI*

Tata Sons concluded a closely watched board meeting in Mumbai on Tuesday amid growing internal tensions over leadership, mounting losses in new ventures and the possibility of a future public listing.

The meeting, held at Bombay House, brought together all six board members, including executive chairman N Chandrasekaran, Tata Trusts chairman Noel Tata, non-executive director Venu Srinivasan, group CFO Saurabh Agrawal and independent directors Harish Manwani and Anita Marangoly George.

One of the key issues discussed was the long-debated question of whether Tata Sons should remain privately held or pursue an initial public offering. The company had earlier reduced debt levels to avoid mandatory listing requirements under the Reserve Bank of India's upper-layer NBFC norms. However, sections within Tata Trusts and some shareholders are believed to favour an IPO to unlock value and create a more stable dividend stream.

No official statement was issued after the meeting,.

The meeting also came against the backdrop of rising friction within the USD 180-billion conglomerate over leadership succession and the performance of several unlisted businesses. Reports suggest discussions on Chandrasekaran's continuation were unlikely during Tuesday's meeting, although he and Noel Tata are understood to have met privately over the weekend to review the performance of group companies.

Concerns have intensified after Tata group's unlisted businesses reportedly posted losses of Rs 10,905 crore in FY25, with estimates suggesting losses could widen further. Businesses facing scrutiny include Tata Digital, the group's electronics ventures and Air India, which has continued to face financial challenges since its acquisition from the government.

The developments have highlighted growing divisions within Tata Trusts, which controls around two-thirds of Tata Sons. Reports point to differences between Noel Tata's camp and another faction of trustees over governance, board appointments and strategic direction. Meanwhile, succession planning within the Tata family has also drawn attention after Neville Tata, Noel Tata's son, was inducted into several trusts and foundations linked to the group.*—PTI*

CIL allays coal shortage fear as India faces power cuts

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

State-owned Coal India Limited (CIL) on Tuesday allayed fears of a coal shortage, saying it has built up a buffer stock of 168 million tonnes (MT) to meet rising electricity demand during the peak summer season.

India is currently facing localised power cuts as an intense El Niño-driven heatwave pushed peak power demand to a record 270.82 GW, surpassing last year's high of 242.77 GW. The sharp rise in use of air-conditioners and cooling devices has placed heavy pressure on the grid, particularly during evening hours when renewable energy generation declines.

CIL said coal stocks at domestic coal-fired power plants stood at 47.6 MT as of May 23, while inventories at mine pitheads reached 113.5 MT — around 10 per cent higher than last year. Additional coal remains at transit points and in railway movement, taking total available stock to 168 MT, enough to meet around 19 days of consumption.

Despite the comfortable national buffer, 21 power plants have reported critically low coal reserves, sufficient for less than a week's demand. CIL has instructed its subsidiaries to maximise coal dispatches through rail and other transport links to avoid supply disruptions.

Power outages have been reported across several states. Chennai residents have faced erratic night-time cuts lasting up to an hour, while complaints have also emerged from Delhi, Noida and parts of Uttar Pradesh. In Odisha and other northern regions, intermittent blackouts have sparked protests as the heatwave continues to intensify. *—PTI*

SC agrees to RIL's request to resolve KG basin dispute

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Supreme Court has agreed to a new plea from Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) to settle the gas migration dispute in the Krishna-Godavari basin amicably with the Centre. A bench comprising the Chief Justice of India and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi considered the mention by senior advocate Kapil Sibal.

Sibal stated that a plea for conciliation had been made, and Attorney General R Venkataramani confirmed the government's willingness to consider the request. The court decided to adjourn the hearing to the third week of July after Venkataramani expressed that the government was open to exploring a bilateral resolution.

The Chief Justice said, "We will be most happy if the dispute is resolved through conciliation. If you come out with a settlement, we will dispose of the appeal." On 20 May, the court had declined a submission by RIL to pause proceedings in the gas migration dispute.

The case involves appeals by RIL, BP Exploration (Alpha) Ltd, and Niko (NECO) Ltd against a Delhi High Court verdict that set aside an arbitral award in their favour. The dispute concerns gas allegedly siphoned from ONGC's blocks by RIL, with a 2018 international panel ruling in RIL's favour.

The Delhi High Court overturned this award in February 2025, allowing the government to demand Rs 2.81 billion. *—PTI*

FERRARI GOES ELECTRIC

Italian luxury carmaker Ferrari has unveiled the Luce, its first fully electric vehicle and the brand's first-ever five-seater, designed in collaboration with former Apple design chief Sir Jony Ive's LoveFrom agency. The EV is expected to cost between Rs 7 crore and Rs 8.5 crore in India after import duties. Powered by four Ferrari-made electric motors, the Luce can accelerate from 0-60mph in around 2.5 seconds *— FERRARI*

In a 25% hike, BSNL revenue rises to Rs 25,000 cr in 2 years

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) registered a revenue growth from Rs 21,000 crore to Rs 25,000 crore, marking a 20 to 25 per cent increase over the last two years, Union Minister of State for Communications Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani said.

According to the Ministry of Communications, the BSNL also registered a rise in its EBITDA margins, which grew from Rs 50 crore to nearly Rs 7,000 crore during the same period.

The Ministry of Communications attributed this growth to structural adjustments, infra upgrades, and private-sector discipline.

"We approached the revival with private-sector discipline. The results are now visible in stronger finances, indigenous technology, and connectivity reaching India's remotest corners," Pemmasani said.

The BSNL targeted regional inefficiencies and in states like Andhra, where tower uptime previously stood at 75 per cent, a target of 95 per cent was established.

The turnaround involved replacing 50,000 batteries across an equal number of towers, upgrading power plants, and replacing aging cables, and setting targets for business and new mobile connections. *— ANI*

Union Bank to raise Rs 8,000 cr through debt, equity mix

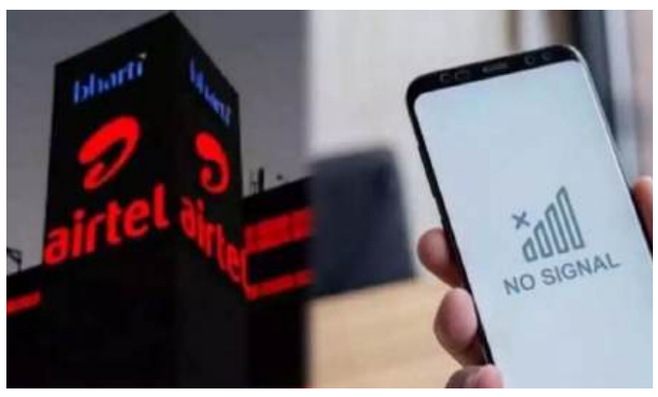
NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Union Bank of India on Tuesday approved raising of up to Rs 8,000 crore, which would include the issuance of equities worth Rs 3,000 crore. In a BSE filing, Union Bank said the board has approved raising of debt capital through Basel III-compliant additional Tier 1 bonds and/or Tier 2 not exceeding Rs 5,000 crore. Besides, the board has approved raising Rs 3,000 crore equity capital in tranches within the overall limit of Rs 8,000 crore, through Public Issue (i.e. Further Public Offer) and/or rights issue and/or private placements, including Qualified Institutions Placements and/or Preferential Allotment. *—PTI*

NET NEUTRALITY CONCERNS

Parl panel reviews Airtel's 5G slicing

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY



Bharti Airtel has defended its new "Priority Postpaid" service before a parliamentary panel, insisting that its 5G network slicing technology does not violate net neutrality norms or reduce service quality for prepaid users.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology, chaired by Nishikant Dubey, on Tuesday sought responses from the Department of Telecommunications and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India on the impact of 5G network slicing services in countries such as Singapore and the UK.

Net neutrality is the principle that all internet users and online content should be treated equally by telecom operators, without preferential speeds or access for certain customers or platforms. Network slicing, enabled by 5G technology, allows operators to create dedicated virtual sections of a network to provide customised speeds or performance for specific users or services.

The panel raised concerns that priority postpaid plans could compromise equal internet access for India's large prepaid user base, which accounts for nearly 90 per cent of mobile subscribers. TRAI and the DoT have been asked to submit responses within 25 days.

Airtel, which launched its "Priority Postpaid" plans on May 19, said the service provides consistent speeds in crowded areas but remains content-neutral. The company said there was "no blocking, throttling, content-specific prioritisation, zero-rating, or preferential treatment of any application".

According to Airtel, current 5G capacity utilisation during peak hours stands at around 38 per cent, while postpaid traffic accounts for only 4 per cent and could rise to 6 per cent under the new system, leaving adequate headroom for prepaid users. The committee also plans to summon major digital firms, including Meta Platforms, X, Google and Amazon, over concerns surrounding preferential digital services.. *—PTI*

NILEKANI LAUNCHES INVESTMENT PLATFORM WITH RS 3,000 CR CORPUS

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

- Nilekani, who is backing the new platform as anchor investor, said technology-led innovation continues to create new opportunities.

Nandan Nilekani's VC firm Fundamentum Partnership announced on Tuesday the launch of a dedicated frontier-tech investment platform, F2A (Fundamentum Frontier Advisors), with an initial corpus of Rs 3,000 crore to back artificial intelligence and deeptech companies in India.

The platform's maiden Sebi-approved fund — Fundamentum III-AI and DeepTech — has a target corpus of Rs 2,000 crore.

Additionally, F2A will oversee up to Rs 1,000 crore in parallel co-investments, says a company statement.

Through both the fund and co-investment structures, F2A will focus on stage-agnostic, technology-led businesses, specifically targeting companies in the forefront of consumer, enterprise, and physical AI.

Nilekani, who is backing the new platform as anchor investor, said technology-led innovation continues to create new opportunities. Founded in 2017, Fundamentum is an investment firm. It has backed firms like Pharm Easy, Spinny, Kuku FM, Wishlink and Olyv. *— PTI*

—ANI

Veteran Indian Olympian archer Shyam dies at 61

BANSWARA, 26 MAY

Shyam Lal Meena, one of India's pioneering Olympic archers and part of the country's first-ever archery team at the Olympics, died on Sunday night after a prolonged illness. He was 61.

Meena passed away at a hospital where he had been receiving treatment for liver-related complications. Born on March 4, 1965, in Kevadia village, Rajasthan, he rose from humble beginnings, initially training with a bamboo bow before gaining recognition through the SAG Scheme. Meena was part of the Indian men's recurve team that won bronze at the 1987 Asian Championships, securing India's qualification for the 1988 Seoul Olympics. He was awarded the Arjuna Award in 1989. After retiring, he mentored athletes at the Banswara Sports Training Centre. *—PTI*

Shreyansh winning in All India Chess Masters

MUMBAI, 25 MAY

Top seed Shreyansh Somaiya (1973) maintained his unbeaten streak with a convincing victory over Nikhil Joshi (1645) in the fourth season of the Mumbai FIDE Rated All India Chess Masters. Reyaansh Venkat (1906), Kush Ajay Agarwal (1835), and AGM Rajveer Pinkesh Nahar (1801) also won their matches, staying in contention. Janhavi Soneji (1792) and Ashish Jain Tvesha (1576) drew their game, while Mayuresh Parkar (1781) defeated Nihal Bhosale (1580). Om Nilesh Deorukhakar (1726) and Aryan Sista (1658) scored notable wins. Manya Balani (1653) impressed with a victory, and Adhavan Oswal (1546) won against Arya Amol Bagayatkar (1773). *—PTI*

Michael Jordan pays tribute to Pep Guardiola at City

MANCHESTER, 26 MAY

Basketball legend Michael Jordan paid homage to Pep Guardiola during Manchester City's farewell event, which included an open-top bus parade and an after-party. Jordan sent a video message to Guardiola, congratulating him on his career and wishing him well in retirement. "I just want to congratulate you on an unbelievable career. Enjoy your retirement," Jordan said. The event celebrated Guardiola's decade at City, during which he won 17 major trophies. Former captain Vincent Kompany and Oasis's Noel Gallagher attended. Khadija "Bunny" Shaw announced she signed a new four-year contract, while Erling Haaland expressed determination to maintain success. Guardiola's last and final game was a 2-1 loss to Aston Villa. *—PTI*

Royals to rely on Archer, Vaibhav to tackle SRH

SRH enter knockouts with an edge after defeating RR

MULLANPUR, 26 MAY

- Sunrisers recovered from a slow start to the season and gathered momentum in the second half, winning five of their last seven league matches after captain Pat Cummins returned to the side. Having already beaten Rajasthan twice during the league stage, Hyderabad enter the knockout clash with a psychological advantage

Rajasthan Royals will rely on teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and pace spearhead Jofra Archer when they face a formidable Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League at Mullanpur on Wednesday.

Sunrisers recovered from a slow start to the season and gathered momentum in the second half, winning five of their last seven league matches after captain Pat Cummins returned to the side. Having already beaten Rajasthan twice during the league stage, Hyderabad enter the knockout clash with a psychological advantage.

Rajasthan, led by Riyan Parag, only sealed qualification on the final day after missing earlier opportunities to confirm their play-off spot. Their batting has largely depended on the explosive Sooryavanshi, who has scored 583 runs, alongside Yashasvi Jaiswal (397) and Dhruv Jurel (458).

Hyderabad possess equally destructive batting resources through Abhishek Sharma (563), Travis Head (393) and Ishan Kishan (569), while Heinrich Klaasen has enjoyed his best IPL season with 606 runs. Both Head and Jaiswal, however, have lacked consistency and the Eliminator offers the ideal stage for a defining innings.

Royals coach Kumar Sangakkara acknowledged the challenge posed by Hyderabad's aggressive top order, stressing the need for disciplined but attacking bowling. Archer, with 21 wickets this season, will again be key after his decisive spell against Mumbai Indians.

Young spinner Yash Raj Punja has emerged as Rajasthan's lead spinner, while Sunrisers rookie wrist-spinner Shivang Kumar has impressed in the middle overs. The Mullanpur pitch has heavily favoured batters this season, with scores above 220 recorded in three of four matches. *—PTI*

TENSE BATTLES

Gukesh, Praggs secure narrow wins at Norway Chess

OSLO, 26 MAY

Indian grandmasters Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa achieved hard-fought victories at Norway Chess, each winning their Armageddon tie-breaks amid tense battles. Meanwhile, world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen experienced a rare defeat in the opening round at the historic Deichman Bjorvika library. Gukesh's win followed a gruelling 144-move, nearly five-hour classical game against Vincent Keymer, which ended in stalemate. Gukesh then sealed victory with a sharp 15.Bh6 in the tie-break, earning 1.5 points; Keymer settled for one.

During the game, Gukesh was visibly rattled, even seeking clarification from the arbiter over the move count as the game neared a draw despite Keymer being a pawn up. Keymer remained composed and pressed on until losing the tie-break. Praggnanandhaa drew with Wesley So in classical chess before winning the Armageddon with a sharp attacking display, earning an extra point.

The day's biggest upset was Carlsen's defeat by Firouzja, who showed remarkable grit despite recent ankle injuries and wearing a protective "moon shoe". Carlsen, in control for much of the game, blundered under time trouble, allowing Firouzja to surge ahead. Firouzja leads with three points, while Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa are joint second on 1.5. Wesley So and Keymer trail with one point each, with Carlsen yet to score.

Results (Round 1): Open — Firouzja 3, Praggnanandhaa 1.5, Gukesh 1.5, Wesley So 1, Keymer 1, Carlsen 0. Women — Bibisara Assaubayeva 3, Divya Deshmukh 1.5, Zhu Jiner 1.5, Muzychuk 1, Ju Wenjun 1, and Humpy Koneru 0. *—PTI*

Iniyan wins double gold at Commonwealth Chess

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Grandmaster Iniyan Panneerselvam secured double gold at the Commonwealth Chess Championship in Sri Lanka, winning both the Rapid and Blitz titles. The Tamil Nadu player scored 6.5 points from seven rounds in each format. In the Rapid, Srihari took silver and Mitrabha bronze; in the Blitz, Rohith Krishna claimed silver with Srihari earning bronze again. The Classical title went to Mitrabha, with Sri Lankan Ranindu Liyanage second and Srihari third. The tournament ran from May 16 to 26, featuring 96 players from multiple nations. *—PTI*

Govt trying to include yoga in Olympics, says Mandaviya

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY:

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday said Yoga would be pushed for inclusion in the future Olympic Games roster keeping in mind India's bid to host the 2036 Games. This statement came as the sport geared up to make a statement with its maiden World Championship in Ahmedabad from 4 to 8 June.

The World Championship will feature 529 athletes from over 60 countries with 114 of them being Indian yogasana practitioners. The Indian squad was picked after trials and is currently undergoing a training camp in Ahmedabad's Veer Savarkar Sports Complex.

"Yogasana will be among the traditional sports in the 2030 Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad...We are bidding to host the Olympic Games in 2036 and when that happens, our sport should be there on the roster. Efforts are being made by both the Government of India and the national federation (Yogasana Bharat) to ensure that Yoga becomes an Olympic sport by that time," Mandaviya said at an event to launch the World Yogasana Championship here.

"Procedure is to have 75 countries as your signatories to become an international federation, after which a plea to the International Olympic Committee can be made for a sport's inclusion in the Olympics," he added. *—PTI*

Yogasana will be among traditional sports in the 2030 Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad Paris *—PTI*

Sports Ministry notifies rules for NSB, NST

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Sports Ministry has notified the operational rules for the upcoming National Sports Tribunal (NST) and the National Sports Board (NSB), including the establishment of a dedicated portal for dispute submissions and legal record maintenance. In separate notifications, the Ministry outlined the roles of both bodies, formed under the National Sports Governance Act passed last year. It stated that a search-cum-selection committee is being formed under the cabinet secretary.

The NSB, acting as the central authority for recognising National Sports Bodies and ensuring compliance with governance, financial, and ethical standards, will comprise a Chairperson and two members with a three-year term. The Tribunal's strength remains unspecified, but the rules incorporate provisions for digital implementation, including a portal for disputes, notices, responses, documents and virtual hearings.

The Tribunal aims to reduce reliance on civil courts and ensure independent, speedy, effective, and cost-efficient dispute resolution. *—PTI*

SINDHU ADVANCE, SATWIK-CHIRAG TOO WIN AT SINGAPORE OPEN

SINGAPORE, 26 MAY

PV Sindhu produced a confident display to advance to the second round of the Singapore Open with a straight-games win over fifth seed Putri Kusuma Wardani on Tuesday.

She defeated the world No. 6 Indonesian 21-17, 21-18 in the opening round of the USD 1 million Super 750 event. Sindhu, ranked 11th in the world, avenged her loss to Wardani twice last year at the World Championships and Sudirman Cup. She will next face Japan's Riko Gunji.

Sindhu made a fast start, racing to a 4-0 lead before Wardani fought back to move ahead 15-11 in the opening game. She responded strongly, winning six of the seven points to take the game. The second game was closely contested, but Sindhu won.

India's men's doubles pair Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also progressed after battling past Malaysia's Chen Zhi Yi and Presley Smith 26-28, 21-15, 21-13.

However, Ayush Shetty lost to Denmark's Viktor Axelsen, while Unnati Hooda exited after defeat to Japan's Miyazaki. *—PTI*

AC Milan sacks Allegri and Furlani after disappointing season

MILAN, 26 MAY

- The club's US owner, RedBird, made the decision a day after Milan lost a Champions League place, losing 2-1 to Cagliari after leading 1-0. The Rossoneri were booed by their own fans

AC Milan has dismissed coach Massimiliano Allegri and CEO Giorgio Furlani following what it described as "an unequivocal failure" of the season. The club's US owner, RedBird, made the decision a day after Milan narrowly missed out on a Champions League place, losing 2-1 at home to Cagliari after leading 1-0. The Rossoneri were booed off the pitch by their own fans.

Milan spent much of Serie A in the top two positions but ended fifth, after a poor run of only two wins in the last eight matches. RedBird stated, "The final stretch was completely inconsistent with the performance up to that point, with last night's disappointing loss turning the season into an unequivocal failure."

The club is now undergoing a major reorganisation, parting ways immediately with CEO Furlani, sporting director Igli Tare, Allegri, and technical director Geoffrey Moncada. RedBird expressed gratitude for their work but confirmed the decision, adding, "We thank each one for their hard work and dedication during their respective tenures."

The organisation retains Zlatan Ibrahimovic as a special adviser. *—PTI*

Mexico to host Iran's World Cup team during tournament

MEXICO CITY, 25 MAY

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Monday that she has "no issue" with her country hosting Iran's World Cup team after its training base was moved from the United States to Mexico for the summer soccer competition.

The team will still play its matches in the US but its base has been moved to Tijuana, Mexico, just south of San Diego, according to Iran's soccer federation. The development comes against the backdrop of the war in Iran, which the US and Israel launched on 28 February.

Sheinbaum said that she was told by a FIFA representative the US was reluctant to have the Iranian soccer team spend time outside the games on US territory.

"The US doesn't want the Iranian team to stay in the US," Sheinbaum told reporters. She said a FIFA representative had then asked, "Can they stay overnight in Mexico?" "And we said, Yes, no problem. We have no issues'," she said. *—PTI*

ANALYSTS SAY

Players, fan tested as heatwave scorches

PARIS, 25 MAY

- Besides making it uncomfortable for fans and players alike, the sultry, humid conditions have also created faster conditions on court, changing the entire pace and tone of the game

Tennis players at the French Open say they haven't experienced conditions this hot at Roland Garros since the Paris Olympics.

Temperatures for the opening two days of the clay-court Grand Slam have soared to 33 degrees C (91 F) — far beyond normal for late May in the French capital. And it's forecast to stay that way for the entire first week.

Besides making it uncomfortable for fans and players alike, the sultry conditions have also created faster conditions on court — changing the pace of the game. "It is much different. Maybe it was that hot in the Olympics but the balls were different, so I wouldn't treat it as the same tournament," four-time French Open champion Iga Swiatek said after routing Emerson Jones 6-1, 6-2 in the first round on Monday.

Visitors cool themselves with water from sprinklers at the French Open tennis tournament in Paris *—PTI*

Players have been putting bags of ice around their necks on changeovers to stay cool, while fans are refreshing themselves under sprinklers.

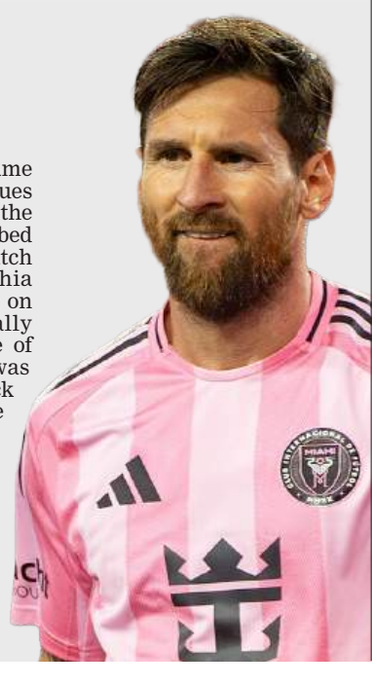
When workers water the clay courts between sets, they have taken to directing their hoses at spectators begging to be doused, too.

"I don't remember the last time it was so hot at Roland Garros," Russian-born Australian player Daria Kasatkina said after beating Zeynep Sonmez 6-4, 6-4. "Maybe one day. But we're going to have it for the whole week." Kasatkina said the energy-sapping temperatures made for more up-and-down matches.

The French Open is usually cool compared to the traditional heat at the Australian Open and US Open. *—PTI*

LIONEL MESSI FACING LEFT HAMSTRING INJURY BEFORE WORLD CUP

MIAMI, 26 MAY



Lionel Messi is injured with a left hamstring issue, one that has popped up about a week before defending World Cup champion Argentina is set to begin its training camp for this summer's title defense.

According to an Inter Miami release, Messi underwent testing on Monday — which almost certainly means an MRI exam, though the team did not divulge what procedures were involved — and was ultimately diagnosed with "an overload associated with muscle fatigue in his left hamstring" that kept him from finishing Inter Miami's match on Sunday night.

Typically, the timeframe for recovery from such issues is varied depending on the severity. Messi was subbed out of Inter Miami's match against the Philadelphia Union in the 73rd minute on Sunday. He essentially stopped playing a couple of minutes earlier and was seen grabbing at the back of his left leg at least once before he could be removed for a sub.

Messi has appeared in five World Cups, winning the Golden Ball as the tournament's best player twice — first in 2014, then again in 2022 when he led Argentina to the title. — PTI